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The Messianic Message
OF THE
Old Testament.

BY

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“So, take and use this work,
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o’ the stuff, what warpings past the aim!
My times be in thy hand!
Perfect the thought as planned!
Let wisdom test the truth, and faith pursue the same.”

—*Amended from Browning.*

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“Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth.”

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PREFACE.

The man who attempts to describe, or even to photograph, jewels, must confess that his best representations cannot convey their lustre and brilliance. It is a better service to exhibit the gems themselves, and with them to contribute a statement of their history and value. Even then many a casual observer will fail to understand their worth and to appreciate their beauty. The messages of the Hebrew prophets are more precious than jewels, and deserve a much more careful consideration. In the present work their utterances are quoted, translated and arranged in such a form as to bear as nearly as possible their original freshness and vigor; historical and literary settings, which are not less, but rather more, vital in prophecy than in other portions of the Bible, are studiously set forth; and, with becoming reserve, and still with hearty, appreciative faith, the Messianic import is frankly estimated. The writer, however, dares not presume that all the divine excellence of each great prophecy is reflected in these pages; but he is content to hope that, on the one hand, the scholar may here find some acceptable suggestions, and that, on the other hand, the common reader may have reason to rejoice in a clearer perception of that wonderful wisdom that spoke through the prophets of old.

Rarely does an author of a work of this nature write under favorable circumstances. In the midst of many cares and toils, often encumbered with matters remote in character from the great theme of his study, delayed by many an unforeseen disturbance, and brought to pause by many a difficult and tedious problem, the author of such a work prosecutes his dearest and most sacred task; and when it is done, and has passed the press,

his last wish is that he had the privilege and the leisure to re-write many a page. To this rule the present writer cannot arrogantly claim to be an exception; but disregarding numerous interruptions, he rejoices over many years of communion with the prophets and the pleasure of teaching and discussing in classroom over and over the material presented in this work. No man can study these priceless prophecies without great personal gain. Even the garments of a jeweler become filled with the dust of precious metals; and much more are the hearts and lives of those enriched who are permitted freely and long to gather out of the very mines of prophetic wealth. In this the writer finds for his labor abundant compensation.

In writing the author has been often sadly reminded that the limitations of space forbade an adequate treatment of dates, authorship and text, although in the nature of his study he has been forced to investigate those questions and to assume positions; but since such discussions are appreciated chiefly by scholars, and their presence here would burden, if not annoy, the general reader, it has seemed wise to reserve this material for another work, which, if Providence permit, will appear in a few years. The author regrets that it is not ready to go out with this publication.

In respect to form, the writer has been influenced to some extent by the need he has felt of a convenient manual on Messianic Prophecy for use in college; for he is fully convinced that the time has come when no biblical seminary can afford to omit from its course of instruction this fundamental branch of Old Testament study. The thought of the prophets is the very soul of the Hebrew Scriptures. Neither a teacher nor a student can feel that a study of the Old Testament is complete without it. With a desire to adapt the book to the growing demand for a text on the subject, certain features of arrangement have been planned, and the treatment has been made as concise as comprehensiveness and perspicuity would permit. It is believed that the sideheads will be valued both by the student in college and by the usual reader in the library. They will in many cases enable the man of haste to grasp the content of a page at a single glance. In

like manner the headings of the several prophecies are designed to express their chief thoughts, and hence possess a certain analytical value.

As to acknowledgements, the writer is grateful to a thousand sources of information and suggestion: but he is especially indebted to a few leading writers whose devout spirits and reverent scholarship have made them worthy to be daily companions; more still is he indebted to the great prophets themselves, whose lives, loyal amidst disloyalty, and whose words, faithful among the faithless, have been an unfailing attraction to the mind, an unceasing and increasing joy to the heart; but most of all he feels indebted to Him, after whom the prophets yearned, on whom the hope of Israel was set, and to whom now and evermore the world looks for justification and redemption—to Him for a task to love, for inspiration to study, for His glorious kingdom as a theme, and for His people's blessing as a motive to write this book. If any reader finds in these pages any vision of truth, any ideal of life, any soul-rest in hope, let the acknowledgement ever be to Him.

CLINTON LOCKHART.

Drake University.

"These three things, the highest boons of God to men—a moral Hero, a kingdom of the good, and the moral Hero making Himself the king of that kingdom by spiritual insight and self-sacrifice, as the suffering servant of God—are the chief fruitage of that remarkable group of prophecies usually called Messianic, which embody the optimistic ideals of Hebrew seers."

A. B. BRUCE.

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ROPHECY under paganism never grew into a practical and directing power; and even the great Roman poet, captivated as he was by its ancient utterance, and the beauty of its promise, yet could do no more with it than convert it into a court compliment, and connect its romantic associations with the prospect of the new-born heir of the Pollios. But as soon as prophecy found a receptacle in the chosen race, it grew strong, it became an architect and builder, it raised institutions, it enacted ordinances. In Abraham it founded a family, in Moses it framed a law, in David it erected a kingdom. The Hebrew people from the first gave prophecy a fixed home, and the nation became the regular and guarded depository of the sacred gift. The Jewish community was the fort of prophecy, maintaining and keeping up the inspired expectation, protecting it from outside blasts, and surrounding it with institutions and schools; so that, preserved as a directing influence among them, it prepared a practical reception for the Messiah; and founded that body of thought in the nation which welcomed Him who fulfilled the promise when He came, and in that welcome founded the Christian Church. Prophecy had thus the most striking practical result, and proved itself an instrument of real efficiency and power.”

—Mozley: *Ruling Ideas in Early Ages.*

The Messianic Message.

Character of Hebrew Prophecy.*

CHAPTER I.

THE MEANING OF TERMS.

Prophet. The word *prophet* does not mean primarily, as many scholars have supposed, one who *shows forth*; nor does it mean one who speaks beforehand; but it means strictly one who *speaks for* another. The prophet among the Hebrews was one who spoke for God. He was the medium through whom God gave a direct message to men. Among the Greeks the same idea prevailed; and hence Aeschylus, writing of Apollo, who was the spokesman for his god, says, "Apollo is the prophet of Zeus."

Prophecy. The word *prophecy*, as derived from the Greek *propheteia*, means the gift of revealing the divine will. The Greek terms for prophet and prophecy were first used in senses suited to the ancient Greek religion; and

*The literature on Messianic Prophecy is extensive, but much of it has a very limited value, partly because of unscientific methods of interpretation, and partly for lack of a knowledge of Hebrew antiquities. Among many books the following may be profitably consulted: Gloag's *Messianic Prophecies*; Briggs' *Mes. Proph.*; Edersheim's *Prophecy and History in relation to the Messiah*; W. F. Adeney's *Hebrew Utopia, a study of Mes. Proph.*; Riehm's *Mes. Proph.*; Wood's *Hope of Israel*; Orelli's *Old Test. Proph. of the Consummation of the Kingdom of God*;

usually signified the communication of divine thought to one in an unconscious ecstasy, who afterward revealed it to others. These words were then transferred into Christian literature as equivalents of Hebrew words used in the Old Testament, and made to bear Jewish ideas of prophecy. As the Jewish ideas were in many respects different from those of the Greeks, the words were forced into new meanings, the exact nature of which must be determined by a careful study of prophecy as exhibited in the Old Testament.

Old Testament Use.

The Old Testament use of the word prophet is most readily seen by comparing Ex. 7:1, "Aaron shall be thy prophet," with Ex. 4:16, "He shall be thy spokesman unto the people, and it shall come to pass that he shall be to thee a mouth, and thou shalt be to him as God." While Aaron is called Moses' prophet, it is explained that he is simply a spokesman for Moses unto the people, that he is a mouth for Moses, who in giving the revelation occupied the place of God. From this it is clear that the prophet was not primarily a predictor of events to come, but rather a herald of a divine message.

Seer.

The word *seer* was sometimes used for prophet. In 1 Sam. 9:9, an explanatory statement is made for the use of the word seer in Samuel's day, that "he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer." This means that at the time of the writer of this verse (probably later than the original writing of I Samuel) the word prophet was used, and meant the same as the word seer meant in Samuel's day.* It is notable, however, that the word prophet

Delitzsch's Mes. Prophecies in Historical Succession; Goodspeed's Israel's Mes. Hope; and many others which in whole or in part treat the subject with interest. Valuable articles may be found in the leading Encyclopaedias and the later Bible Dictionaries, also in all the leading religious reviews. Commentaries on various Messianic portions of the Old Testament are valuable, but the older works of this class are badly antiquated by modern research. For full lists of works, see Riehm's Mes. Proph., new edition, or Goodspeed's Israel's Mes. Hope.

*On the possibility that the seer and the prophet were not exactly the same, A. B. Davidson thus writes: "The seer was an isolated personage like the great prophets. But, further, the characteristic of the true 'prophet' was that he pursued national religious ends. Samuel

occurs also in Ex. 7:1; Gen. 20:7; Num. 11:29; 12:6, as if it had been in use long before Samuel's time; and it may be true that for a brief period in the time of the Judges the word "seer" was usually substituted for prophet, while prophet was the customary term both before and after that time. A prophet was called a seer, because in receiving his message he often saw visions, and always saw, in mind, the truth to be revealed or the forthcoming event to be announced.

Other Terms. Some other terms for prophet, generally descriptive and sometimes figurative, were used by Old Testament writers. For example, "man of God" (I Sam. 2:27), "man of the Spirit" (Hos. 9:7), "Lord's messenger" (Hag. 1:13), "watchman" (Jer. 6:17; Ezek. 3:17), and other terms of like character are found. In some measure these titles are expressive of the official relations of a prophet to God and to his people.

The title prophetess is given to Miriam (Ex. 15:20), who, so far as we know, was merely a religious poetess; to Deborah (Jud. 4:4), who may have possessed prophetic gifts; to Huldah (II Chr. 34:22, ff.), who was certainly a true prophetess; also to Isaiah's wife (Isa. 8:3), but this was probably only because her husband was a prophet.

did this with more splendid initiative than the greatest of his successors. He created the nation by giving it a king; they only sought to preserve it. But the seers of his day, if there was such a class, may have ministered rather to personal and private interests, as Samuel himself seems to have done on some occasions (1 Sam. ix). In 1 Sam. 3:1 it is said that 'vision' when Samuel was young 'was not widely diffused;' but 'vision' is here used of true prophecy such as the author was familiar with in his own time. History leaves us in complete ignorance in regard to the seers. In fact, the only seer we know of is Samuel, and his history is told us in a very fragmentary way." Hastings Bible Dictionary, Vol. iv. p. 108.

CHAPTER II.

THE MANNER OF DIVINE COMMUNICATION.

1. *By Dreams.*

**Given Through
Prophets.** Dreams were sometimes given to the prophet, by whom they were communicated with their interpretation to those for whom they were sent.

An example of this is seen in Joseph's dream (Gen. 37:5-11), which he told to his parents and brothers. Likewise a dream was given to Solomon (1 Ki. 3:5), in which he was permitted to choose a divine blessing. That this was a familiar method of receiving revelations among the Hebrews, is assured in Num. 12:6, in which Jehovah says, "If there be a prophet among you, I, Jehovah, will make myself known unto him in a vision. I will speak with him as in a dream." The words of Elihu (Job. 33:14-16), bear a similar import when he says, "For God speaketh once, yea twice, though man regardeth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction." The dream was very suitable to the divine purpose in giving a prophecy, since not only was the prophet removed from the distractions of the more active moments of life, but also he was in position to receive a very deep impression.

**Given
Directly.**

Many prophetic dreams were given directly to the persons for whom the messages were intended, and were interpreted by a prophet.

Such were the dreams of Pharaoh's servants (Gen. 40:5, ff.), which were interpreted by Joseph; that to Pharaoh (Gen. xli),

in the interpretation of which Joseph foretold the seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine; also that to Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. ii), in which the king forgot the dream, and the prophet Daniel made known both the dream and the interpretation.

Advantages.

An advantage in presenting the dream to the person for whom the message was designed, appears in the fact that a much deeper impression is thus made upon the mind than if the prophet had merely told a dream of his own. There was also a good reason for having a human interpreter. The power of interpretation would distinguish the prophet as an appointed medium of divine communication; and this would mark him as able to deliver other messages from God, and make him a more valued counselor in matters of religion or state.

**Value of
Common Dreams.**

The fact that prophecies were sometimes given in dreams is not intended to imply that all dreams have prophetic or other very important significance.* The worthlessness of many dreams was as apparent to the Hebrews as to us; and this is clearly indicated in Ps. 73:20; Isa. 29:8; and Jer. 27:9.

**Value of Pro-
phetic Dreams.**

The dream that had prophetic value was probably much more impressive than other dreams, and doubtless the interpretation was often impressed clearly and unmistakably upon the prophet's mind. Otherwise he would be unable to distinguish the dream containing the message from those that were void of import.

*The ethical value of common dreams is well spoken by Marcus Dods, Com. on Gen. xxxvii. "Dreams become significant when they are the concentrated essence of the main stream of the waking thoughts, and picturesquely exhibit the tendency of the character. * * * Our vanity, our pride, our malice, our impurity, our deceit, our every evil passion, has free play, and shows us its finished result, and in so vivid and true though caricatured a form that we are startled and withdrawn from our purpose. The evil thought that we have suffered to creep about our heart seems in our dreams to become a deed, and we wake in horror and thank God we can yet refrain. Thus the poor woman, who in utter destitution was beginning to find her child a burden, dreamt she had drowned it, and woke in horror at the fancied sound of the plunge—woke to clasp her little one to her breast with the thrill of a grateful affection that never again gave way."

The true prophet seems never to have been in doubt when he received from God a revelation in this way. For example, Joseph had no hesitation about the dream when the Lord told him to take the infant Jesus and his mother into Egypt; nor was he in doubt when he in like manner was told to return. In some way that we may not now fully describe, the dream carried its own attestation.*

2. *By Visions of the Eyes—Sense Visions.*

Object Lessons.

Object lessons were sometimes presented and interpreted. Abraham saw a smoking furnace and a flaming torch pass between the pieces of his sacrifice at night and heard at the same time the terms of his covenant with God in which the land of Canaan was promised to him and his posterity (Gen. 15:17, 18). In like manner Peter on the house-top in Joppa had the vision of a sheet let down from heaven containing many species of animals of which he was to eat without making the usual Jewish distinctions (Acts 10:9-16). Such were also the visions of Zechariah (1:8, 18; 2:1, etc.). Such visions, like dreams, were usually accompanied by definite interpretations, although rarely they were left unexplained (Rev. 15:5-8).

Theophanies.

Sometimes God made special manifestations of himself by visions to the prophets. Thus, three men appeared at the door of Abraham's tent (Gen. 18:2), whom he afterwards learned represented Jehovah and his angels (Gen. 18:22; 19:1). In this case God appears in human form, partakes of Abraham's hospitality, reveals His promises and converses as a man with a man. In a similar manner He appeared to Moses in the burning bush (Ex. 3:6), in which He called Moses to the office of deliverer and law-giver of the Hebrew people. Other like manifestations were that to Moses (Ex. 33:17-23), in which the glory of Jehovah passed before the

*Briggs holds that while "the dream plays an important part in the prophecy of the Bible, in guiding the patriarchs of Israel and the human guardians of the Messiah," yet the dream is "simply a phase of prophecy, a test is needed to determine whether there be prophecy in it or not." Mes. Pr. p. 7.

prophet who was protected in a cleft of a rock; that to Isaiah (Isa. 6), in which Jehovah appeared sitting upon an exalted throne surrounded by seraphim while his glory filled the temple, and Isaiah was called to his prophetic labors; that to Paul on his way to Damascus (Acts 26:16-18), when he was called to be an especial apostle to the Gentiles; also that to John (Rev. 1:13-18), in which Jesus manifested himself as the author of the messages about to be written to the seven churches in Asia. Such manifestations of God are called theophanies.*

Value of Theophanies. The value of theophanies may not be fully known; but it is evident that they assisted greatly in assuring men of olden times, not only that God exists apart from men and from all the objects of nature, but that he is clothed with glory and invested with power surpassing even human comprehension. While this was an aid to faith, it was a powerful motive to obedience and loyalty. Through the testimony of those to whom theophanies were given, all later generations have enjoyed a greater assurance of God's presence in the world and his personal interest in humanity.

How Understood. The Hebrews did not understand that in these theophanies they beheld the real person and full glory of Jehovah; for God is represented as saying to Moses that "man shall not see me and live" (Ex. 33:20); and the apostle John (I John 4:12) expressed the conviction of the apostolic age when he said that "no man hath beheld God at any time." From such statements it is clear that theophanies were understood to be only manifestations of a divine presence and power suited to human vision and understanding. It is in a sense somewhat distinct from this that Jesus represents himself as being a manifestation of

*"We do not find these theophanies in connection with every prophet, but only with the greatest prophets, the reformers of their age. It is possible that other prophets were also called by theophanies which they have not described to us. But this is improbable. It was indeed unnecessary. Theophanies were to initiate religious movements and mark the stages of their development, but are not the constant feature of prophecy." Briggs, Mes. Pr. p. 21.

God when he says to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I say unto you I speak not for myself; but the Father abiding in me doeth His works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me." In these words the Savior announces, not only his divinity, but his complete representation of the Father's character and disposition toward men. He further indicates to Philip that the most important feature in a vision of the Father is not to see Him in person, but to have a view of the divine character and will.

3. *By Visions of the Mind—Mental Visions.*

**Visions of
Truth.**

The prophets frequently enjoyed visions of the truth which they were to convey instead of visions of objects as hitherto described. The prophecy of Isaiah is introduced by the words, "The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem;" and this is followed by Isaiah's messages to the people without a description of any vision by the eyes within the first five chapters. Likewise the prophecy of Obadiah begins with the words, "The vision of Obadiah;" and yet the prophecy does not mention a vision by the eyes, but simply announces the truth which the prophet had seen by divine help.

**Given by
the Spirit.**

If we inquire by which person of the Trinity such visions were given, the answer is furnished by the apostle Peter (2 Pet. 1:21): "But men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." That mental visions were given by the Holy Spirit seems to be amply confirmed in both the Old and the New Testaments. Samuel told Saul that the Spirit of Jehovah would come mightily upon him, and he should prophesy; and later the historian informs us that the Spirit of God came mightily upon him, and he prophesied (1 Sam. 10:6, 10). Still later the record says that the "Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied" (1 Sam. 19:20).

**Examples
in N. T.**

Jesus foretold the prophetic work of the apostles in Lu. 12:12: "The Holy Spirit shall teach you in that very hour what ye ought to say." From this it is clear that the apostolic messages came by the Holy Spirit, just as those of the older prophets. This accords with the preparation of the apostle John for his prophetic work on the Island of Patmos, concerning which he says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice." It was one of the especial functions of the Spirit to make known divine messages to the prophets and the apostles.

**Ecstatic
State.**

Since some of the prophets are described to us as being in an ecstatic state when they received their visions, it might be thought that such a state was essential to their reception of revealed truth.* It is certainly true that the prophets were usually in such a condition when they received sense visions; as in the case of Balaam, who speaks of himself as, "the man whose eye was closed . . . who seeth the vision of the Almighty, falling down, and having his eyes opened." Here the falling and the closing and opening of the eyes in connection with his vision of Israel, seem to indicate an unnatural state of mind. On one occasion (2 Kings 3:15), Elisha called for a minstrel, and when the minstrel played the hand of Jehovah came upon the prophet, which seems also to point to the need of a peculiar state to prepare the prophet for his message. In this instance, however, the minstrel may have been employed to allay the mind of the prophet which had been deeply disturbed by the presence of the idolatrous king of Israel, and thus put him in a better mood for his prophetic work. In Acts 10:9-11, Peter is said to have been entranced when he saw the vision of the sheet let down from heaven. We thus have evidence that the prophets were often in an unnatural state of mind when object lessons or sense visions were presented. Proofs are abundant that such a state of mind was

*For full discussion and diversity of views on the ecstatic state, see Riehm, *Messianic Prophecies*, p. 20 ff. The main question in dispute is whether or not the ecstatic state was necessary to receive a divine message. The truth appears to be that ecstasy was not essential to all prophecy, but had a place in the less exalted forms of prophecy.

not necessary to the reception of truth by inspiration, nor to a theophany. Cf. Luke 12:11,12; Gen. 18:1,ff.

Sanity of Prophets. It might be thought that if the prophets were sometimes in an ecstatic state, they may not always have been sane; and this suggestion has found some confirmation in the case of Saul when he was forced to prophesy, and acted in a manner most unbecoming a sound mind (1 Sam. 19:23, 24). No doubt, in this case, Saul *was* mad; however his madness was not a condition necessary to his prophesying, but it was a punishment for his wicked pursuit of David. His prophesying merely gave evidence that the punishment was inflicted by Jehovah. Saul was not performing the regular functions of a prophet; and his madness does not imply that such a condition accompanied the regular work of prophets. In Jer. 29:26, certain false prophets, referring to Jeremiah, spoke of "every man that is mad, and maketh himself a prophet," implying that Jeremiah was an insane prophet. This passage has sometimes been employed to show that Hebrew prophets may have uttered their messages when in a state of insanity. This is certainly a misinterpretation: for the false prophets, being angry with Jeremiah, were only slandering him to the high priest. There is no known instance of any Hebrew prophet performing the proper functions of his office in a state of insanity. Such ravings as those of the Mohameton der-vishes or the American Indians received no encouragement from Hebrew teachers.* Indeed, the ravings of the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:26-28) were severely ridiculed by the prophet Elijah as strictly a heathenish practice. The utterances of the true prophets were often poetical and highly figurative, but always sane and sensible.

*"The necromancers are represented as chirping and muttering in the practice of their art, 1 Ki. 18:26. It was the sacred dance, the frenzied, ecstatic whirling. The Shamans of Eastern Asia use a tambourine and stimulants until they cast themselves into an unconscious state, and then are aroused to answer questions which are put to them. Their answers are often surprisingly accurate, although they know nothing that has transpired when they awake into consciousness again. The Grecian prophetesses were filled with the prophetic ecstasy by the foul gases arising from clefts in the rocks. There the Grecian oracles were established and temples erected as at Delphi, Dodona and elsewhere. At

4. *By Simple Inspiration.*

Examples.

The prophets frequently received messages by the Spirit of God without the use of dreams or visions. For example, 2 Chron. 15:1, 2, "the Spirit of God came upon Azariah, and he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him," etc. Similar expressions occur often in the Old Testament, and indicate that the message of the Spirit indited in the heart of the prophet was immediately delivered, and required no vision to make the truth apparent. This is made more clear by the words of Micah (3:8), "I am full of power by the Spirit of Jehovah, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin." Here the Spirit directly empowered the prophet to judge and to declare his message. In such cases the prophets were so completely under the influence of the Spirit that they were often said to be "in the Spirit" (Matt. 22:43), or filled with the Holy Spirit (Lu. 1:67). A notable instance is that of the apostles on Pentecost (Acts 2:4), when "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." The gift of messages by inspiration was much more usual than dreams or visions; and indeed the latter were employed mainly to produce a deep impression or conviction upon the mind of the prophet.

Inspiration, in the sense of mental afflatus, may be regarded as natural or supernatural; but since this division relates to its source rather than its nature, the word "kinds," though often used, is inappropriate. Likewise so-called "degrees of inspiration" do

the present day the Dervishes of Mahometans cast themselves into the ecstatic state by whirling themselves in a circle or by howling for a long time. The Indian Fakirs cut themselves with knives as did the ancient prophets of Baal. There are also in the unconscious somnambulism and the gift of second sight kindred phenomena. In these ecstatic conditions involving unconsciousness to the external world the inner emotional and intellectual nature moves with great rapidity and freedom, and, as in the dream, reaches solutions of difficult problems and discerns the issues of events far and near. As in the dream so in the ecstatic state, there may be instinctive prediction and instinctive guidance through difficulties; or there may be entire failure." Briggs, Mes. Pr. pp. 8, 9.

not mark useful distinctions; for the natural inspiration, as observed in the orator or poet, might be more intense than the supernatural. Moreover, we may not even note any psychological difference between the two, since in either case there is simply an unusual zest and productive activity of the mind. In the natural inspiration the products are the fruitage of the unaided human intellect, while in the supernatural the divine mind imparts to the human mind, that is, enables it to think, ideas that it did not before possess. By such conferred ideas a new revelation may come to men, or a new impulse or restraint may be awakened in the prophet. Clearly the writers of the old Testament assume such a supernatural inspiration, and the student of prophecy is chiefly concerned with the phenomena which these writers present. The question whether such supernatural inspiration ever existed, belongs to the student of apologetics; but the rich unity of the whole system of Old Testament prophecy and its vital connections with christianity are here taken as overwhelming evidence of divine guidance in the prophet.*

Effects.

Properly speaking, inspiration did not affect the senses of the prophet. He saw and heard all things just as others and experienced no feelings different from his fellowmen, except that he had a profound consciousness that God had given him a truth, and wished him to declare it. This feeling is clearly expressed by Jeremiah (20:9), "And if I say, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name, then there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot contain." This can be justly understood to mean only that when the prophet knew it to be his duty to warn his coun-

*"The conclusive vindication of the prophets as true messengers of God is that their work forms an integral part in the progress of spiritual religion. * * * A less complete but yet most powerful vindication of the spiritual prophets was furnished by the course and event of Israel's history. After the captivity it was no longer a question that the prophetic conception of Jehovah was the only possible one. Thenceforth the religion of Jehovah and the religion of the prophets are synonymous; no other reading of Israel's past was possible, and in fact the whole history of the Hebrews in Canaan, as it was finally shaped in the exile, is written from this point of view." W. R. Smith, Enc. Brit., Art. Prophets.

trymen, he could not conscientiously neglect his task; otherwise he was as miserable as if fire were shut up in his bones. A similar experience is expressed by Amos (3:8), "The lion hath roared; who will not fear? The Lord Jehovah hath spoken; who can but prophesy?" It is apparent that the feeling of responsibility was affected in these cases, but the natural exercise of the senses was not disturbed.

**Prophet
not Passive.**

The foregoing remarks imply also that the prophet was not passive when inspired. This is confirmed by other considerations: (1)

The individual style of the prophetic writers appears in all their books; for each work has its own peculiar characteristics of thought and expression.* (2) The prophets as the preachers and political advisers of their time, often did not need to be passively governed by the Spirit, but could regularly perform the greater part of their work by their own power after the essential message or policy had been revealed to them. (3) Sometimes the prophets copied their materials from other prophets, historians or state records; and hence did not need to be passive under divine influence. Perhaps the nearest approach to passivity is found in those instances in which the inspired persons spoke in languages wholly unknown to themselves; for in such tasks they were altogether unable by the exercise of their own powers to accomplish anything but the mere use of their voices.

**Message
Limited.**

We are not to assume that the prophets when endowed with the Holy Spirit were possessors of all knowledge. The apostle Peter, who certainly had experienced a full measure of this gift refers to the ignorance of the prophets, and affirms that they "sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what time, or what manner of time

*As Canon Farrar urges that inspiration is not, "to quote the favorite metaphor of Montanus, the playing of the Spirit upon the harp of man's being as upon a passive instrument. It is the inmost harmony of the spirit of man with the Spirit of God within the sphere of human limitations." God uses men as men are, weak, imperfect, often mentally or ethically indisposed, and thereby disqualified for the perfect transmission of divine ideas. Just as no metal permits an electric current to

the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them." He declares that even the angels desire to look into those things (1 Peter 1:10-12). There is every reason to believe that the prophets usually received just one message at a time, and that the one which was most imperatively needed at the moment. God did not give to them more than was necessary to secure the immediate divine purpose. They knew in part, and they prophesied in part (1 Cor. 13:9). This explains the silence of inspired men on all the wonderful truths of history and science not immediately connected with their office as religious teachers.

**Relation to
Signs of
Times.** On the other hand, it is impossible to believe that the prophets derived their teachings merely and only from the signs of the times in which they lived. Many of their utterances relate to events that must have been beyond their natural horizon.* Jeremiah could not have predicted the length of the Babylonian Exile (29:10) by mere natural foresight. He might have naturally anticipated the Babylonian conquest and the exilic distress but he could not foresee by any indications of the times that the exile would have a definite limit, and much less could he thus foreknow its time. Numerous prophecies find their highest and their only fulfilment in the Messianic kingdom, concerning which the signs of the times could furnish at best but a feeble suggestion. Here again the apostle Peter, who must have been an earnest student of prophecy, declares what is evident throughout the whole period of prophetic activity in

pass through it absolutely unhindered, so no prophet was capable of becoming a perfect medium of divine communication. This does not mean that the prophet was unreliable, but that God must work with him as with us, according to the material with which He deals. It is certain that the work of God could not rise to so great an excellence when Saul prophesied as when Isaiah spoke.

*On this point Orelli says, "Hoffmann, indeed, goes too far in making the prophecy so dependent on the history, that the former is merely the interpreter of the latter—i. e., puts into words the knowledge which ought at any time to be gathered from God's historical revelation. On the contrary, prophecy, issuing freely from the divine Spirit, is often far in advance of history, announcing really new things. But the out-

the Old Testament, that "no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).

**Classes of
Inspiration.**

Various classes of inspiration on the basis of the extent of its influence are recognized by scholars, but the varieties are not altogether distinct from each other. (1) Mechanical inspiration is that in which every word is dictated to the prophet by the Holy Spirit. To this extent inspiration must have very rarely influenced men, possibly only when inspired persons spoke in an unknown tongue. (2) Plenary inspiration is a full inspiration, in which the thought, the logic, and even the general character of the language are given by the Spirit. These may have been given sometimes to the prophets, but there are good reasons for believing that the greater portion of the Bible was composed without so great fulness of spiritual influence. (3) Verbal inspiration is that which relates to the words of the prophet. Formerly the words were used to express the idea of dictation of the words by the Spirit; but most scholars have more recently explained the meaning of verbal by reference to 1 Cor. 2:13, "Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth." In this passage "words" (Greek *logoi*) must not be interpreted to mean the vocables of which the inspired sentences were composed; but, as the Greek term was always used, to mean the conceptions, the form of thought, or the ideas. We must not understand therefore that the Holy Spirit taught the apostles the very language of their utterances, but that it taught them the truths and the conceptions of truth which the apostles were to a great extent free to express in terms of their own choice. (4) Superintendent inspiration is that which merely guards the prophet from error in his teaching. This

ward experiences of Israel negatively prepared the ground for prophecy, and positively furnished it with material." After showing that historical events opened the way for larger prophetic visions, he adds, "Under the joint operation of all these motives the prophetic voices spoke now louder, now softer—now more clearly, now more obscurely. But their discourses were not the work of the spirit of the age, but of the one Spirit of God." Mes. Proph. pp. 34, 35.

seems to be promised to the apostles by the Savior in John 16:13, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth." Since "guide you into all the truth" cannot reasonably mean to reveal all the truth, much of which was already revealed by the Master, it would seem to mean that the apostles were to be protected by the Spirit from serious error. It is possible that the Spirit exercised this protective influence over much of the work of those men who prepared the Holy Scriptures. (5) Elevating inspiration is that which enabled the prophet to recall truth which he may have formerly received and to speak or write with more than ordinary power, or with a very exalted style. Jesus promised that the Spirit should teach the disciples all things, and bring to their remembrance all that he had said to them (John 14:26). It is notable that much of the Bible possesses a peculiar and almost superhuman power over the mind of the reader, and that it has a style remarkable in the literature of the world for its combined dignity and simplicity. (6) Suggestive inspiration is that which gives new truth, but leaves the mind of the prophet entirely free and his expression altogether voluntary. Doubtless the greater part of the prophetic work by the Hebrew seers was performed under influence of this character. Inspiration probably did not extend beyond what was just necessary to accomplish the divine purpose; and usually a competent prophet was abundantly able in his own way to deliver his message effectively after it had once been clearly impressed by the divine Spirit upon his own mind.

5. *By Urim and Thummim.*

The Stones. Still another method of securing the divine will was by the use of certain stones called Urim and Thummim which were put into the breastplate of the high priest and worn by him when he entered into the presence of Jehovah. The words mean "Lights and Perfections." They may have been the twelve stones worn by the high priest in the sacred breast-plate which bore the names of the twelve tribes before Jehovah (Ex. 39:8-14); or they may

possibly have been other stones likewise held by the high priest. They are rarely mentioned, and seem to have been used mainly, if not wholly, to secure the counsel of God.

Manner of Use. The manner in which the divine message was received by the use of these stones is a subject of conjecture. The following methods have been suggested: (1) The priest may have asked of Jehovah a question which could be answered by yes or no, and read the answer by the lustre of the stones. (2) It may be that the stones when brought into the presence of God merely guaranteed to the high priest a hearing, while the answer was given by Jehovah in spoken words. (3) It is possible that the priest read the answer from the appearance of letters on the stones, by which God spelled out his response. (4) Another possibility is that the stones were used to cast lots, so as to determine between an affirmative and a negative answer. In the absence of evidence, it is difficult to choose among these suggestions. The presence of the ark of the covenant which was in the tabernacle where the high priests usually consulted Jehovah, was not necessary to secure a hearing; but it would seem that the priest's ephod on which the breast-plate belonged was deemed essential to such a consultation. Cf. 1 Sam. 23:9-11; 30:7, 8.

6. *By Casting Lots.*

The Method. The Hebrew prophets sometimes obtained a divine decision by casting lots before the Lord with the understanding that God directed the lot so as to express His will; hence the proverb (Prov. 16:33): "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of Jehovah." Undoubtedly the prophet was compelled to submit alternatives to the Lord, and let the lot show which of the alternatives was divinely chosen. An example of this appears in the choice of an apostle to succeed Judas; in which case two persons were selected and the lot was cast to choose between the two (Acts 1:23-26). Often a greater number of alternatives must have been presented, as in the division of the land of Canaan among the tribes and families of Israel (Num. 26:

55), or in the selection of Saul out of all Israel to be king (1 Sam. 10:20-24).

Limitations. It is evident that the lot must not be relied upon to consult divine wisdom by all persons and under all circumstances. God must necessarily hold His omniscience beyond all access of men engaged in the ordinary and trivial affairs of life. Accordingly there must have been some well understood restrictions upon the use of the lot, although these restrictions have not been recorded in the Bible. It is probable that the lot was often used in common matters without an assumption that it gave a divine decision. Apparently among the Hebrews, as among later people, the casting of lots was used to adjust difficult questions by a mere appeal to chance; hence the proverb (Prov. 18:18): "The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty."

CHAPTER III.

THE FALSE PROPHETS.

1. *Source of Their Prophecy.*

Imitation.

The presence of false prophecy might reasonably be expected as an imitation of the true. The fact that many pretenders appeared not only among the Hebrews, but also in almost all nations, is no proof that all prophets were false. In this case, as in many others, the counterfeit only proves the genuine. Indeed, the very success of the true prophet provoked imitation by persons of unworthy character; and the fame of the true prophet made the field of prophetic activity the more attractive to false men. Besides this, the natural desire of humanity to probe the mysteries of life produced a great demand for prophetic work; and on this account such an office was often very lucrative (cf. Acts 16:16).

Sources

of Materials. The true prophets well knew the character and methods of those who by false prophecy were attempting to thwart the work of Jehovah in Israel. They did not hesitate to expose the false prophets, and have left to us their full explanation of those deceptions. They mention the following sources of the material used by the false prophets: (1) They often uttered what Jeremiah calls "a lying vision" (Jer. 14:14). By this he means that the false prophets reported visions which they had never seen, so that their utterances were pure fabrications. (2) The same writer ascribes other work of the false prophets to divination. By this he means the use of various occurrences as signs of forthcoming

events. We are aware that the Greeks and Romans consulted the flights of birds, the trails of serpents, and the appearance of the viscera of slain animals. Joseph in Egypt pretended to his brothers that he "divined" by means of his drinking cup which was put into Benjamin's sack of grain (Gen. 44:5), just as cups are used in our own day in telling fortunes. Everywhere in the Old Testament divination of this sort is discredited or positively condemned. (3) Some of the false prophecies are described as "visions of their own heart" (Jer 23:16). The charge here is that the false prophets consulted merely their own imagination in preparing their messages, and hence that they well knew their vanity and falsehood.* (4) Other utterances were stolen from the true prophets (Jer. 23:30). For example, if Isaiah at the time of Sennacherib's invasion had truly predicted that Jerusalem should not fall, a false prophet a hundred years later when Jeremiah was predicting the immediate overthrow of the city might steal Isaiah's prediction and falsely apply it when the circumstances were wholly different. What was true of the city's safety at one time might not be true a hundred years later.

2. *Test of Their Prophecies.*

Need of Tests.

Since false prophets must have been numerous in Israel, and the work of the true prophets must not be thwarted by that of the pretenders, some convenient and reliable tests were required to distinguish between the true and the false. Doubtless indications of genuineness and of deception may have appeared in the character and the demeanor of the prophets; but as these were liable to very careful imitation, they were not entirely reliable.

*On the prophetic conscience, see Riehm, *Mes. Proph.*, p. 16 ff. On the value of the conscience in the true prophet over the sense of deceit in the false prophets, he says, "The consciousness that they received a definite commission from Jehovah exercises upon the prophets themselves a force so overmastering that all their own inner resistance to it cannot be reckoned of account (cp. Amos 3:8 and esp. Jer. 20:7-9). On the other hand, just here lies the power which enables them to face every danger with indomitable courage, and to fulfil their commission even when all the forces of king, princes, people, priests, and a whole pack of false prophets are arrayed against them (cp. Jer. 1:17 ff.; 20:10 ff)."

Two Tests. Two tests are definitely described in the Old Testament: (1) Disloyalty to Jehovah was to be considered a clear proof of fraud in a prophet. Accordingly, in Deut. 13:1-3, the people were warned that if a prophet arose in their midst urging them to go after other gods and serve them, such a prophet was to be put to death for having spoken rebellion against Jehovah. (2) The other test of false prophecy was its non-fulfilment. This test is given in Deut. 18:22, "When a prophet speaketh in the name of Jehovah, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which Jehovah hath not spoken: the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously." On the other hand, Jeremiah (28:9) said, "When the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that Jehovah hath truly sent him."

Conditional Predictions. When we remember that not all of the predictions of the true prophets were fulfilled, as in the case of Jonah's prophecy of the fall of Nineveh, it is interesting to inquire how non-fulfilment can be a reliable test. The reason the true prophecies did not always come to pass is that many of them were conditional, and the conditions were not fulfilled by the people. It is true that sometimes these conditions were not expressed along with the predictions, but they were in many cases well understood both by the prophet and his hearers.* This was true of the prophecy of Jonah. It was generally true of predictions uttered as warnings against sin, or as rewards for righteousness. When false prophets uttered unconditional predictions, as their presumption would usually lead them to do, the non-fulfilment was a decisive test. Some of the prophecies presented ideals which were above human realization; and such utterances needed no test, since they are evermore the goal of an advancing race.

*This feature of Hebrew prophecy was clearly discerned by Canon Farrar: "Nothing is more clear than the fact, that in most instances the prophets themselves, even when they make no verbal reservation, did not regard their denunciations as absolute, but as conditional; not as exceptionless, but as partial; not as supernaturally predictive, but as the illustration of eternal principles which God had especially brought home to them. Their menace always implied an 'unless.'"

CHAPTER IV.

PERIODS OF PROPHETIC ACTIVITY.

Occasions of Activity.

Prophecy presents no exception to the general rule of periodic activity and repose in the literary history of nations. Among the Hebrews there were certain seasons of prophetic work, and other seasons of protracted rest. The activity of the prophets in great measure depended upon the following condition of the nation: (1) When the immorality of the people became great, a corresponding effort was required by the prophets to counteract the evil. This is clearly illustrated in the work of Noah, Elijah, and many others. (2) The prevalence of idolatry, which was most radically obstructive of the divine work with Israel, required the most vigorous action on the part of the prophets. The work of Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, and others will be readily recalled in this connection. (3) Israel's need of political guidance often required the help of God through the prophet, and thus induced a series of prophetic labors. Moses, Samuel and Isaiah are conspicuous examples of prophets who gave the greater part of their labors to the direction of political affairs among their people; and periods in which these men lived are notable for their prophetic productions. (4) In some instances the work of prophets was needed to prepare the nation for great blessings that were just at hand. While Moses was a law-giver, much of his effort was devoted to the preparation of Canaan. Likewise the work of John the Baptist was almost wholly given to the task of making the Jewish people ready for the coming of the Messiah.*

*Briggs refers to the roll-call of prophets in Hebrews xi, and esteems

Characteristics. The work of the prophets was not precisely the same at all times, and any proper division of their labors into periods must recognize the characteristics that appeared prominent at different times. With this in view, we may mention four periods of prophetic work within the range of the Old and New Testament history.

1. The Early Old Testament Period—Adam to Samuel.

In this first period we may notice that the prophets were rare, and were usually independent of each other. Their predictions are brief and scattered as if we might have only a few remaining fragments of all that they uttered. Their prophetic duties did not comprise the main business of their lives, but were added casually to their other and more usual occupations. Such were the prophetic labors of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Deborah and others.

2. The Medieval Old Testament Period—Samuel to Amos.

This period was marked by the following characteristics:

(1) The prophets were numerous and often united in schools. In Samuel's day the prophets were assembled in groups when Saul met them and prophesied among them (1 Sam. 10:10, 11). When Elijah was making his last tour with his friend Elisha, they met with the "sons of the prophets" at Bethel and at Jericho; and after the removal of Elijah, as many as fifty of the "sons of the prophets" went forth to seek the body of their master (2 Ki. 2:3, 5, 16). It would seem from 2 Kings 4:38 that the prophets dwelt in companies; for they sought their food together, and a large number partook of the same pottage. In the days of Ahab when the prophets of Jehovah were threatened with destruction, Obadiah hid a hundred of them in caves (1 Kings 18:4). In like manner the prophets of Baal were so numerous that Elijah knew of four hundred and fifty of them (1 Kings 18:22). (2) The prophets became counselors of the kings, but only in an irregular way. Samuel advised Saul throughout the earlier part of his reign (1 Sam. 13:13, 14).

them the greatest of heroes. "No such names are to be found in the history of any other nation,—or in the history of all the other religions combined,—heroes of battles the most sublime the world has ever seen; battles not for the reigion of Israel alone, but for the religious progress of humanity for the everlasting religion of mankind."

Nathan and others gave advices and reproofs to David, as in 2 Samuel 12:1-15. Elijah reprov'd Ahab repeatedly (1 Ki. 17:1; 18:17:19:1).

(3) Some of the prophets were writers of psalms, proverbs and history. Doubtless many of their writings, like those of Samuel, Nathan, Ahijah, Iddo and Gad (1 Chron. 29:29; 2 Chron. 9:29) have not been preserved; but undoubtedly some of the compositions of David and Solomon, possibly the writings of several others, form parts of our present Old Testament.

3. The Later Old Testament Period.

This period differs from the preceding one in several points. (1) The prophets were less numerous and much more independent of each other. Amos, Isaiah, Hosea, Nahum and many others seem to have had a few companions if any at all. Even contemporary prophets do not seem in all cases to have been associated with each other. Each had his own field to which his prophetic labors were mainly confined. (2) In this period a high literary ability was developed in psalms, history and prediction. The prophetic writings of this time present some of the most worthy specimens of exalted literature to be found in any language. (3) Many of the loftiest Messianic conceptions of the Old Testament were produced at this time. (4) The prophets were in some cases regular counselors at the courts of their kings. Of this class of prophetic advisers Isaiah and Jeremiah are conspicuous examples. Altogether this was by far the most notable period of all Hebrew prophecy.

4. The New Testament period.

The conditions of prophetic teachers in this period were very different from those that obtained at any time in former generations. The Messiah which had formed the far away but central figure of the older prophetic vision had now become a reality. The exalted spiritual kingdom toward which the old prophets were constantly looking forward had now become a living force among the Hebrews, and was rapidly extending among the nations of the world. The prophets are now transformed into apostles and teachers in the church. While their labors are often in fields far removed from each other, and their work assumes considerable independence, nevertheless they are bound

together by cords of fellowship such as the older prophets rarely realized. Since this was a period of fulfilment, it was not remarkable in new and exalted prediction. The Messianic theme of the older prophets has become a gospel theme with the newer ones;* and the new themes of prediction pertain mostly to the fall of Jerusalem, the destinies of the Church and the end of the world.

*“The star of Messianic hope was kindled when man lost Paradise; it burned brightly in Moses; waxing and waning it once more shed unwonted lustre over the aspirations of the Psalmists; in Isaiah it reached its fullest and most unclouded splendor; it shone less brightly in Ezekiel and his post-exilic successors; in the interspace between the two dispensations it waned into the blurred and twinkling glow of a vague national abstraction, until at last it hardly existed except in the breast of the Prophet of the Wilderness; and after becoming for ages little more than a formula among the Jews of the dispersion, it is now avowedly set aside by many Rabbis as a metaphor or a delusion. It was reserved for Christian insight to see that the whole life of Israel is in some sense a Messianic prophecy; that their law was, as Tertullian says, **gravidæ Christi**; and that of Christ even when they knew it not, all the prophets spoke.” Farrar.

CHAPTER V.

THE NATURE OF PROPHETIC INSTRUCTION.

1. *Religious Instruction.*

Office of Prophets. The Prophets were the preachers of their day. It was their office to keep alive the fires of religious interest among their people, to guard the true faith from the intrusion of the idolatrous religions by which they were surrounded, and to protect the morals of Israel from the corruption which threatened on every side. To perform effectively this work of religious and ethical admonition, various methods were employed to secure the hearing and impress the hearts of their people. Some of these methods deserve a brief notice.

Direct Address. (1) Like preachers and reformers in every land and time, the prophets found it necessary to reach their people by direct address. Moses is represented in Deuteronomy as delivering numerous addresses, partly of a prophetic character, and designed to accomplish homiletic ends. Samuel delivered his messages to Saul by direct address, and in like manner he gave his prophetic instruction to the people of Israel (1 Sam. xii, xv). Likewise much of the work of Isaiah, Jeremiah and other later prophets consisted in sermons and other oral addresses delivered to the kings or to the masses of the people in public assemblies. Cf. Isa. 1:10, 18; 2:5; Jer. 2:1, 2; Ez. 33:1, 2; Hos. 4:1, et al.

Object Lessons. (2) For the purpose of making the message very impressive and fixing it in the memory, the prophet often used object lessons. When Elijah wished thoroughly to convict the Baal prophets of fraud and make the

king of all Israel know that the idolatrous religion of Queen Jezebel was no other than a monstrous deception, he instituted a test for Baal and Jehovah by the erection of altars with sacrifices and by calling down fire from heaven in the presence of the king and multitudes of the people (1 Ki. 18:36-38). When Isaiah desired to impress deeply his prediction of the fall of Damascus and Samaria, he took a great tablet and wrote upon it the puzzling name Maher-shalal-hash-baz, which meant "haste, spoil, speed prey," and signified to all the Hebrews before whose eyes the tablet was erected that the spoil of Damascus and the prey of Samaria would be speedily carried away by the Assyrian army (Isa. 8:1-4). Jeremiah was commanded at one time to make bonds and bars, and put them upon his neck, and then send them to the kings of various nations contiguous to Palestine accompanied by the message that every one of these kings must place himself in bondage to Nebuchadnezzar or suffer punishment at the hand of Jehovah (Jer. 27:1-8). In like manner Hosea makes his unfaithful wife and his children represent the people of Israel who were unfaithful to God and whose restoration to divine favor was the great task of the prophet (Hos. 3:1-5). These object lessons were generally employed when the obstinacy of Israel rendered direct address ineffective.

(3) The prophets also made free use of history to illustrate their religious instruction. They often made appeals to the former works of Jehovah with the children of Israel to prove His faithfulness and good will toward them. Over and over the prophets reminded their hearers of the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage, of the divine help in the conquest of Canaan, and of the punishments which Jehovah had inflicted when they were disobedient. Indeed, much of the Old Testament history was composed by the prophets, and designed to fulfil a prophetic purpose. Doubtless this accounts for the very notable fact that these records are too brief and fragmentary to be really called history. The accounts in Genesis relate but a few scenes in the whole history from the creation of the world to the call of Abraham. Likewise, a few brief accounts sum up the work of a long line of Judges,

or relate the deeds of the many kings of Judah and Israel. What is even more notable is the fact that these accounts do not possess natural proportions. While eleven chapters in Genesis are intended to cover a period of more than two thousand years, the remaining thirty-nine chapters compass only the lives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The account of Joseph alone covers fifteen chapters. From this disproportion it is clear that the author of Genesis did not attempt to prepare a real history of his people. On the other hand, all these accounts are designed to teach religious lessons, which was the very work of the prophets, and which stamps the greater part of what is usually called the historical portion of the Old Testament as prophetic literature.

Moreover, the devout reader finds evidence
Supernatural that some parts of these accounts were super-
History. naturally given. It is difficult to believe that the record of Creation,* which most remarkably transcends the scientific and religious thought of the age, presents merely the dream of an ancient Israelite. It is also difficult to explain many other religious conditions and sentiments of the early Hebrews if we neglect or reject the theophanies to which the leading religious movements of that people are directly ascribed. Thus some of the events were divinely brought to pass. It is absurd to assume that priests or prophets with merely human ingenuity devised that lengthy historical preparation of the Hebrew people for the Messianic age which culminated only in the work of John the Baptist and Jesus himself.**

*“Noted physicists like Agassiz, Dana, Guyot, and others have openly declared that the narrative of the Creation recorded many centuries ago what so far no man could know of himself, and what at the present time is only partly revealed by the study of geology. Hence the narrative of the Creation is not **myth**, but **history**.” Kuyper, *Work of Holy Spirit*, p. 77, Eng. Tr. This statement hardly represents a consensus of scholarly opinion. It must be conceded that the agreement between the account in Genesis and the story as read in the rocks is remarkable in general outlines; but as regards details, variations are numerous and not unimportant. We should remember that the Bible is not written to

***“For the history of Israel culminates in Jesus Christ. This is true in the sense, not merely that he is the last and greatest figure of Israel’s history, but also that all the history was making toward him, preparing

Poetry.

(4) Some of the work of the prophets was prepared in poetic form. This is illustrated in the prediction of Noah (Gen. 9:25-27), the blessing bestowed by Isaac upon his son Jacob (Gen. 27:27-29), the predictions of Jacob concerning the twelve tribes (Gen. xlix), the Song of Moses (Deut. xxx), all of the prophetic psalms and many passages in the prophetic books. The poetic form was probably given to the messages by the prophet at his leisure, usually after his address to the people, but in some cases the verses may have been prepared in advance, that they might be the more attractive when uttered in public. In some examples the written poem betrays the older form in prose.

Extent of Inspiration.

The extent to which inspiration affected the poetic form is not always traceable; but the following considerations may be suggestive on this point: (1) The form was due in part to the zeal of the prophet, and this zeal was probably heightened at times by his inspiration. The great earnestness, passion and pathos of some prophetic poems clearly manifest the zeal of their authors in a message that must have been given by inspiration. (2) The poetic form was due also in part to the prophet's purpose, and this may have been induced by the Holy Spirit. In Jer. 36:3, the prophet is bidden to write his predictions in a book; and the purpose of the writing is given him by the word of the Lord, that they "may return every man from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin." (3) The poetic form was often due to the nature of the message, which was indited by the Spirit. In almost all languages poets suit the metre of their verses to the character of the subject treated. It would be very inappropriate to use a long and heavy measure to convey a light and playful thought, or to employ a light and rippling verse to express sentiments of grief or melancholy. Accordingly, the nature of the message which the Spirit gives,

teach geology or any other physical science, but religion; and exact scientific statements would only serve to divert the mind from this all important theme.

for him, revealing elements, ideas and forces which united and came to their fulness in him." G. S. Goodspeed, *Israel's Mes. Hope*, p. 2.

will determine the kind of poetry which the prophet will compose. (4) The form of verse was due also partly to the talent of the writer; and while this might on some occasions be strengthened by the Spirit, it must have been usually the natural possession of the prophet. The fact that each prophet manifests peculiarities of style throughout his writings is proof that in a large measure he exercised his own talents. Altogether it is probable that the artistical features of Biblical poetry, were almost wholly the private work of the prophet himself; while often the message and its purpose were the gifts of inspiration.

2. *Legal and Political Direction.*

Prophetic Lawgivers.

Since the prophets were the divinely endowed leaders of the nation, they had much to do with the enactment of laws and the determination of administrative policies. The most notable lawgiver in Israel's history was Moses, who was also a prophet; and even in the discharge of his duties in the giving of the law he was acting a prophet's part. Along with the laws as found in our Hebrew records are interspersed numerous predictions, the very announcement of which furnished the setting of the statutes. For example, in Ex. 23:20-25, the law against idolatry and polytheism is introduced by the prediction that the angel of the Lord will go before the Israelites to drive out the Canaanites before them; and Israel is commanded not to adopt the gods of a rejected and defeated people. Likewise, in Deut. 18:9-22, the prediction of the conquest of Canaan is made the occasion of a very strict law against sorcery and divination as practiced by the nations who were about to be expelled from the land as an abomination to Jehovah; and in compensation for the loss of diviners and augurers which Israel might feel, a prophet was to be raised up by the Lord who should be competent to guide the nation wisely, and to him they were required to give heed.

Prophetic Advisers.

Many of the prophets who were not lawgivers, were political advisers of the kings. David's reign was blessed by the counsel of Nathan, who favored the king with divine advice at the most critical times

of his administration. Hezekiah would doubtless have surrendered Jerusalem to Sennacherib had it not been that Isaiah armed with the promise of God stood right at his hand resisting other counselors and predicting the speedy downfall of the enemy.

Reason. A good reason may be assigned for this political effort; for the direction of the nation of Israel was a vital part of the divine plan. It was necessary to keep Israel separate from other nations, in order to protect the purity of her morals and her religion. But this political independence in the midst of great empires could not in the natural course of events be maintained; and it was necessary that the divine wisdom through a prophet should sometimes in a crisis intervene to restrain the unwise counsels of short-sighted princes and kings. In many cases, notably that of Jeremiah, the prophet thrust himself into the midst of a corrupt court, struggled hand to hand with unscrupulous politicians, and, as might be expected, received the reproaches and calumnies of princes and populace. As divine preachers, however, they did not avoid political conflict when for lack of true principles of government the high destiny of the nation was imperiled.

Work for Other Nations. While other nations, and perhaps sometimes a large part of Israel, regarded Jehovah as only a local divinity limited to one people and one country, the true prophets well understood the unlimited sweep of Jehovah's power in the earth, and they often prophesied concerning the fortunes and fates of other kingdoms. From the time of the promise to Abraham that in his posterity should all the nations of the earth be blessed on through the labors of the leading prophets of the Old Testament, the value of Israel to the other nations is kept steadily before the minds of the people. It is on this account that the prophets gave numerous predictions concerning the flourishing and fall of the great contemporary world-powers. Jehovah was indeed the God of the Hebrews, but only that through them he might reach all the other peoples of the earth.

3. *Prediction.*

Themes. (1) The themes of prediction are of three classes: (a) Many of them relate to individual men or their tribes. Such are the blessings of Jacob upon his sons (Gen. xlix), such is the prophecy of Samuel to Saul (1 Sam. 13:13, 14), such is also the notable prophecy of Nathan to David concerning the son that should sit upon his throne (2 Sam. 7:8-16), and that by the same prophet to the same king concerning the disasters that should fall upon the household of David on account of his sin (2 Sam. 12:10-14). (b) Many others relate to nations, whether Israel or those abroad. Such is the prophecy of Balaam (Num. 23:7-10; 24:20-24), and those of Isaiah concerning Babylon, Moab, Damascus, Egypt and others (Isa. xiii-xxiii). (c) But many clearly relate to the anticipated Messianic kingdom. Such is that concerning the Wonderful Counselor (Isa. 9:6, 7), that concerning the Servant who was smitten of God (Isa. liii), and those concerning the kingdom which the God of heaven should set up (Dan. 2:44, 45; 7:26, 27). Within these three classes may be summed up the subjects of Hebrew prediction, however direct or sweeping, whether pertaining to events near at hand or those that gather into their embrace the fortune and destinies of peoples in the most distant future.

(2) Relation to the times.

Historical Coloring. (a) The predictions were usually connected intimately with a history; and the historical conditions often colored the expression of the prophecy, and furnished for it a setting which necessarily requires attention at the hands of a careful interpreter. Whatever may be the meaning of Gen. 3:15, it is certain that the occasion of the woman's temptation by the serpent is the essential background of the statement, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." It is clear that the prophecy concerning the virgin's son in Isa. 7:10-

17 is inseparably connected with the political question, which was burning in the mind of Ahaz concerning an alliance to save Judah from an invasion by Syria and Samaria; for before the child should be old enough to choose between evil and good the two kings of those countries were to be overcome and their land laid desolate. This historical setting did not interfere with the great reach which a prediction might have, seeing that in many cases a promise of good, however distant, could be used by the prophet to encourage the people of his own day to greater exertions to loyalty and righteousness.

Threats and Promises.

(b) The times often demanded a threat or promise which was embodied in the prophecy. When Amos found his country very corrupt he remonstrated with his people, pointing out their sins, repeatedly threatening them with the calamities that must inevitably attend their evil course; and then at the very close of his book he utters one promise of blessing intended to encourage the nation to reform. Isaiah mingles threats with promises designed to restrain violence and to cheer the upright in their despair (Isa. 1:15-31, et. al.). Likewise, Elijah at one time threatened Ahaz with a long continued drouth, and later promised him abundance of rain (1 Kings 17:1; 18:44). In all these cases and scores of others the conditions of the people when the prophecies were given demanded the very messages that were delivered; and hence the language of the predictions was adapted to the circumstances of the prophet.

Crises.

(c) Important prophecies were mostly given in the crises of the nation, and were intended to rescue the plan of God's dealing with His people from an impending disaster.* Such a crisis appeared at the time of the

*The Hebrew prophets were wonderfully adapted to meet emergencies in Israel's history, to throw themselves into the breach, to rally fleeing forces, retrieve lost fortunes, and save the nation; and this was due to the optimism of divine purpose which they breathed as a breath from heaven. Thus Farrar: "A most precious characteristic of the mission of the prophets is the steady, inextinguishable spirit of hope which animated them amid the direst catastrophes of their people, and which gleams out amid their stormiest predictions of retribution and woe. Even in abasement their horizon is always luminous with the certainty of victory." *Minor Prophets*, p. 13.

deluge when the corruption of man threatened his complete destruction; and hence Noah, a prophet, was commissioned to preach righteousness, and succeeded in saving his own family, and so preserving the race. Another crisis arose in the call of Abraham and the beginning of a long line of posterity which must be trained in loyalty to Jehovah; hence the numerous promises and prophecies through this "father of the faithful." The deliverance of Israel out of Egyptian bondage presents another crisis that brings forth the prophetic activity of Moses. The beginning of the monarchy was another turning-point in Israel's history; and hence the prophetic work of Samuel, David and others. No greater crisis occurred in the progress of the divine purpose with Israel than during the long period of the decline and captivity of the nation at the hands of the Assyrians and Babylonians; and therefore that notable galaxy of prophets among whom were Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. It is not remarkable if, in such critical times when the prophecy is the means of saving the nation, the messages are carefully adapted to the circumstances and expressed in language to fit the needs of the people.

For
Posterity.

(d) While prophecy was usually designed to meet an immediate want, it was also frequently put in writing, that it might become a heritage to posterity.* There were two reasons why this should be so. The one is, that posterity might be taught to carry on the plan which Jehovah had revealed to their fathers; and the other is, that as time advanced and the predictions were fulfilled, Israel and the world might see that it was a divine plan and purpose that was being wrought out in the history of this chosen people. This is illustrated by the exiles in Babylonia who were influenced by the prophecies that had been uttered concerning the re-

*On the value of these writings Canon Farrar has some well chosen words: "The writings of the Hebrew prophets are the crown and flower of the Old Testament writings. They are also the most unique representations of Hebrew nationality and thought. Other nations have had their poets and historians; but no nation has produced a set of writers so morally eminent and politically beneficent as the Greater Prophets. They stand forth as the Protestants and Reformers of Judaism." *Mi. Pr.* p. 21.

turn before their fathers were carried away in captivity (Dan. 9:2); and especially in the New Testament the recorded utterances of the Old Testament prophets are often quoted as proof that the Christ fulfilled a long-laid purpose of God.

(e) While the prophets were constantly influenced by their environment, they were not able to draw from the natural study of the times truths so far-reaching as those which they sometimes left on record.* They were doubtless able by a knowledge of the principles which bring success or failure to foresee prosperity and disaster; but no application of natural principles or knowledge of human nature could enable a prophet to describe with unerring accuracy the unique character and office of the Messiah as portrayed in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. No estimation of natural consequences nor any political foresight could prepare Jeremiah to foretell the length of the exile and the return of the captives (Jer. 29:10, 11). It was not possible for Jacob to foresee by any signs of the times the lion-like power of Judah and the long line of royalty which should make that tribe pre-eminent in all Israel (Gen. 49:9, 10). No connection of prophecy with the times could qualify the Psalmist without divine revelation to predict the coming of the one who should at the same time be a powerful king, a universal judge, a victorious warrior, and yet a priest forever (Ps. 110), all of which are fulfilled in the Messiah. Nevertheless, this fact does not disprove a connection of these notable prophecies with the circumstances under which they arose.

(f) The times in which the prophet lived required that many of his predictions should be conditional; for the messages were primarily designed to encourage the people to a loyal obedience to Jehovah, and a con-

*"Hebrew prophecy presents us a system of instruction which cannot be explained from the reflections of the human mind. It gives us a view of redemption as the final goal of the world's history, which is heaven-born, and not a human invention. It accomplishes a work in advancing redemption that overcomes all human resistance as by a divine force. Its holy character—its absolute truth—its implicit confidence in the ultimate accomplishment of the most beautiful, elevating and sublime hopes—all combine in showing that one supreme, superhuman energy inspired it all." Briggs, Mes. Pr. p. 32.

ditional promise was the most powerful motive that a large class of people could receive. Unconditional threats or promises did not influence character; it could produce only a careless anticipation or a helpless despair. A promise of blessing based upon righteousness of life served well to sustain many a weak character that would otherwise have yielded to perverting influences. There were, however, some features of the divine plan that were not contingent upon the characters or deeds of men. The Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world had been unconditionally determined upon in the divine mind; and hence certain predictions like that to David (2 Sam. 7:16), "And thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure for ever before thee; thy throne shall be established for ever" (cf. Ps. 89:3, 4), were unconditional and not to be thwarted by any of the weaknesses or follies of men. Jeremiah gives the prophetic law of conditional predictions (Jer. 18:7-10), that if evil be spoken of a nation, and the nation repent, the evil will not come upon it; and if good be spoken of a people, and the people turn aside to iniquity, the good shall not be realized.

The conditions upon which predicted events were contingent were not always expressed.

Conditions
Unexpressed.

Indeed, in the majority of prophecies the conditions were understood, or perhaps expressed in other addresses by the prophet or other parts of the same address. In the preaching of Jonah at Nineveh no conditions were expressed in the message at all, but the people anticipated them, and Jonah himself understood them. The conditions were probably omitted to make the message emphatic. A threat of some great disaster put unconditionally makes a deeper impression upon the hearer than a threat put in contingent form.

(g) The Hebrew prophets presented true ideals. They alone saw God's high purposes; and the people, not discerning the perfection of the divine intent, were constantly marring the prophetic work. While the ideals of the prophets were high, they did not present at any time the entire purpose of God. They painted the picture by parts; and no one of them beheld an entire view of the plan of human redemption. Each prophet had before his mind a

single section of the Messianic scheme; and not until the Messiah himself set forth his kingdom complete was it possible to put the prophetic fragments together and see the entire picture in its true perspective.

Not Complete Alone. If each prophecy were studied entirely alone, its significance could not be fully understood.*

A machinist might find a part of a cog-wheel, and understand that the cogs signified the fitness of the wheel to some other part of a machine; but he could not from this fragment discern completely the whole structure to which this belonged. He would not also attempt to state in full the purpose of this fragment, unless the whole machine and its ultimate design were known to him. So when we attempt to interpret a prophecy, we may see immediately its fitness in part to some historical condition; but it is impossible to understand it thoroughly until the whole system of prophetic work and the whole plan of God to which the prophecy belongs be presented fully to our minds. Hence the folly of denying the Messianic character of certain prophecies simply because the Messianic feature is not indubitably apparent in the prophecy when studied by itself. No prophecy is complete in itself, but all prophecy is more or less directly connected with the final revelation of human redemption.

(3) Limitations to prediction.

As to Details. (a) From the principle of the fragmentary character of Old Testament prophecy already announced, it follows that every prophecy is limited. Naturally the details of distant events which are unimportant at the time of prediction are not foreseen. Sometimes details are introduced poetically into a prediction, not with intent that such details shall be literally fulfilled, but for the rhetorical purpose of heightening the effect of the utterance. If the exact details

*How faithfully Orelli holds to this vital truth! Note his words: "It must not be overlooked that the single prophetic oracle is not a chance product of momentary circumstances and moods, but professes to come from the divine Spirit; and that this origin is confirmed by the inner unity of prophecies originating in the most diverse circumstances and individuals, and separated by centuries; finally, that the revelation of Christ claims to be the one center, in which all the arteries of this

of coming events were written, the result would be history written in advance, which would often embarrass the actors at the time of fulfilment, and the prophecy itself would serve more to gratify curiosity than to induce a more faithful life among the people.

(b) On the same principle time and distance are rarely seen by the prophet in their true proportions. The prophet, like a watchman in his tower, sees an object on the horizon, notes its general outline, but is unable to determine its exact distance or the rapidity of its approach. Accordingly prophetic numbers are rarely exact or literal; but are usually definite for indefinite (the figure of synecdoche), and are designed to express the importance or the certainty of the prophecy. For example, in Rev. 11:11, speaking of the two witnesses who were dead, the prophet says, "And after the three days and a half the breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet;" which is much more vivid by specifying the three days and a half, however indefinite that period may be, than the statement would be without such a time period included.

(c) The conditions of many prophecies may not have been seen fully by the prophet. It was no doubt the divine intent that the events at last should be modified on the one side by man's freedom, and on the other side by God's justice and mercy. This principle seems to be involved in the remark in 2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." This implies that the promise concerning the end of the world is delayed, not because God is careless to fulfil it, but because the

organism meet. Thus a mode of treating single oracles is demanded, which does not consider them as isolated atoms, but regards them in their inner connection. And since every organism can only be truly understood in all its members from the completion of its development, the connection and full significance of the prophecy of the Old Covenant can only be duly appreciated in all its members from its fulfilment in the New Covenant." Mes. Pr. p. 61.

fulfilment depends at least in part upon man's repentance and God's longsuffering. The conditions do not appear in the earlier announcements concerning the close of this age.

**As to
Degrees.** (d) In describing future blessings or woes, joys or sorrows, or other things admitting of degrees, the prophets are not always informed in what degree the experience will be realized. In this respect it was usual for the prophet to use a superlative as a means of securing a livelier interest among his hearers. Thus, when Ezekiel describes Jerusalem and the land of Judah as it was to be after the return of the exiles, he presents a picture of beauty and prosperity, of wealth and power, that the city and land never attained, and could not attain without an unparalleled miracle. This does not mean that the prophecy was false, but that the future prosperity was pictured in ideal forms and degrees which Israel never could fully secure. Exactness was not the purpose of prophecy, and hence it yielded everywhere to the more important design to develop a righteous people and a kingdom of holiness.

CHAPTER VI.

THE OBJECT OF HEBREW PROPHECY.

Reveal God's Design.

1. One object of prophecy was to unfold God's design in the creation and administration of the world. Man of his own power was not able to unravel the mystery of his own existence or of other things about him. This secret was hidden in the mind of the Creator; but since man was a creature of reason and of self-determination, so that he might be moved by motives, it was necessary that the Creator should set before him a goal to be won.' Furthermore, if it was the intent of God to assist man toward this goal through many generations, it was necessary to reveal to the race the meaning of the divine assistance. The prophets were the agents of God to make known the divine purposes to their fellowmen.

Give Moral Principles.

2. Another object of prophecy was to reveal and impress the elements of moral law. To bring about a system of salvation like that developed in the Scriptures, a great system of moral principles must be constructed, which the limited intelligence of man was not able to devise.* The prophetic lawgivers and reformers of the Old Testament by a long series of labors did rear a system of ethics, which for the support of truth and right has been proved to be far better than fortresses, more enduring than

*It is sometimes claimed that modern research has disproved the divine origin of Hebrew ethics; that contemporary nations had similar ideas of morality; and that the ethics of the Egyptians, Arabians, and especially that now manifested in the Code of Hammurabi, embraced all the fundamental principles of the Hebrew legislation. It is very true that the heathen in all lands have ever had an elementary system of morals, that some have produced better codes than others, and that some of these are admirably well developed; but these facts do not obscure

pyramids, and more influential than princes or monarchs. Moreover, this law became one of the most important features in the preparation which the older dispensation furnished for the kingdom of God. [Christian institutions would have been impossible without a thorough inculcation of those moral principles which the law deeply implanted in the Jewish mind.]

**Establish a
True Religion.**

3. It was the purpose of prophecy also to establish a true religion. Heathen peoples had systems of worship which had grown up in their midst, but which were full of corruptions, and lacked a recognition both of the true God and of the true nature of acceptable service. In the midst of this darkness, it was the office of the chosen people to set forth a shining light. [While others offered sacrifices, these were to make known to the world the acceptable kinds of sacrifices and the true meaning of all sacrifice. While others engaged in prayer and praise, these were to show the vanity of empty forms of worship and the folly of service from hearts that were corrupted with vice. While others in their ignorance served God in temples made with hands, these were to teach that He is Lord of heaven and earth, that He is not served by men's hands as though he needed anything, that He has made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us, for in Him we live and move and have our being.] It was the work of the Hebrew people in the course of many generations to develop ultimately the Christian church which should through all time be the instructor and exemplar of the true worship in spirit and in truth.

**Guide Israel
to Destiny.**

4. Still another purpose of prophecy was to guide the nation of Israel toward that high destiny for which it was selected. It had been separated from all other peoples of the earth, that upon it Jehovah

the work of the prophets of Israel, who constantly advanced the ethical standards of the people, and based them upon the high ground of the character, the will and the purpose of Jehovah. Others made morals a matter of personal honor or practical utility, always unsteady foundations, which suggest no ideas higher than man, no redemption from sin, no future glory of the race.

might bestow his choicest promises, that to it He might give a law instructive to nations of every age, that in it might be manifested a pure and exalted worship, and that through it might be brought to the world the richest of all blessings in the Messianic kingdom. A nation which was to fulfil missions so lofty as these, and which was nevertheless disposed with the same weaknesses as the rest of humanity, required almost constant direction, instruction and discipline, lest it fail of its high achievement. This guardianship of national fortunes was a part of the prophetic office.

5. But, last of all, it was the purpose of Usher in the New Kingdom. prophecy to usher in the new kingdom. The Old Testament prophets were always preparing for a time to come. Their work always pointed toward some future culmination of events. They looked forward to one who should sit for ever on David's throne; they anticipated a period when the savage and the gentle should be transformed into a spirit of unity and harmony; and they foretold a kingdom that should never be destroyed, a sovereignty that should not be transferred to another people. The whole work and life of the Hebrew prophet was to make his people ready for that "far off divine event." That event was the goal of prophecy. It was to be the culmination of the age-long purpose of God.

Messianic Prophecy.

Utterances of Hebrew Prophets.

CHAPTER I.

PATRIARCHAL PROPHECIES.

1. *Preliminary Note.*

Independent Value No prophetic messages are invested with greater interest than those brief, rare utterances which are inlaid in the patriarchal history. Strangely enough, their value is almost independent of literary criticism.* They are gems of so evident quality that little depends upon the formation in which they were originally set. No matter when or by whom it was said that man was created in the divine image, its truth and significance are unchanged. No difference in what pre-Christian age or by what person it was first announced that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, the words convey the same profound prophecy. Whether the blessings of Noah and of Jacob were pronounced by those fathers over the heads of their sons, or composed by some far removed Hebrew poet, their depth and reach of truth are the same. All these passages are irrevocably prophetic; and whether intentionally or not, their author or authors, spoke words of destiny,

*On this point the remarks of G. S. Goodspeed (Is. Mes. Hope, pp. 13, 14,) are irrelevant. He says, "All these materials are organized, interpreted, and idealized under the influence of the religious conceptions and aspirations of later ages, in which the religious education and divine guidance of Israel's teachers had passed beyond the elementary stage." In a foot-note he adds, "The consideration of the historical background of this material would then naturally come in the periods to which the prophetic interpreters belong." The truth is, the Messianic kernel of the patriarchal history is not interpreted in the records at all. On the historical accuracy of these accounts, criticism has no

which no human eye could have foreseen, and no human heart without divine aid could have pre-conceived. They can be neither the chance product of primitive life, nor the substance of poetic dream: for the utterances themselves are greater than the men who made them, and their meaning cannot be compassed by the conditions of any time when they may have arisen. As precious stones do not always reveal their beauty to those who mine them or examine them in the quarry, so these prophecies betrayed not the secret of their value to either patriarch or poet, nor do they disclose it to the strictly contextual interpreter, but they reveal their inherent wealth only when held up to the light of Messianic development.

**Setting and
Forms.**

It is significant that these early utterances are chiefly in poetic form set in the midst of prose literature. This suggests that the writer of the history is not the author of these remarkable words. They have come down to him in a fixed form, and not as other sayings freely recorded in the patriarchal story. These prophecies were legacies from the fathers, precious heirlooms handed down in the sacred family through uncounted generations. The messages in this period assume two forms, (1) that of direct divine declaration to persons prepared to receive it, and (2) that of parental blessings and curses communicated by the father to his sons.

The former is a natural and consistent event in a period of personal direction from God and numerous theophanies, and at a time when, if ever, the divine presence in the guidance of the race was needed. It was then, according to our records, that God walked in the

word; as G. A. Smith has said, "It is simply impossible for us at this time of day to establish the accuracy." The Messianic poem of this period is far older than the present form of the historical narrative; and since the narrative does not interpret the poem, and the accuracy of the narrative is not subject to criticism, how little may criticism interpret the poem through the unknown author of the narrative! Prof. Ryle (Cambridge, Eng.) has the truth: "There are no clear criteria by which to distinguish precisely the historical nucleus contained in the patriarchal narratives from the idealized picture." Without criteria, criticism is unable to decide whether the later writer has given an "idealized picture" instead of the "historical nucleus" or not. Fortunately in later prophecy criticism has a more certain field.

garden, or man walked with God, or the Most High appeared in vision or at the tent-door of those whom He had chosen as the instruments of His communication and influence with men.

The latter form is remarkable for the importance attached to a father's blessing. The father was understood to be gifted with a promise from Jehovah that related to his posterity; and it was reasonable that he should hand down at least to one of his children this precious boon with all that it might mean. The blessing conferred this sacred gift. As the favor itself was divine, none doubted that the final choice among the sons was divinely guided, and would be divinely honored. Whether or not this idea was correct, we may decide only by the logic of events. If, in fact, as all later ages establish, the blessing remained where it fell, if through the midst of the ten thousand contingencies and fluctuations of human fortune an unseen hand has unfailingly secured to the chosen son and his posterity a marvelous form and fulness of the blessing pronounced by the father, who shall question the prophetic value of his words? The father was endowed with one precious possession which by his blessing he gave as an inheritance to the chosen son; and thus as by a testament which could not be broken he bequeathed the richest part of his fortune.

2. *The Image of God. Gen. i. 26-30.*

The Plural Pronoun.

There is a matchless simplicity and majesty in the first utterance concerning man in the Scriptures. There is a hidden dignity in the opening words, "Let us make man." No measure of scholarship has been able to sound the depths of the simple pronoun "Us." Many interpreters have suggested that it is the plural of majesty, and that a like plural appears in the Hebrew word for God (*Elohim*); but if so, why do such sentences as this occur very rarely* in the Bible? and why does the word *Elohim* regularly take a singular verb or pronoun when referring to Jehovah? Others have explained the plural by reference to the Trinity; and this is possible, since the Father, the Son (*Logos*), and the

*Compare Gen. 11:7; Isaiah 6:8.

Holy Spirit are all represented as having part in the creation of the world (1 Cor. 8:6; John 1:3; Gen. 1:2). Nevertheless, it seems remarkable that the Trinity should appear in this verse, and nowhere else in this account, and never elsewhere by the use of plurals. Others suppose that the plural form here marks simply a deliberation on the part of the Creator when about to create the noblest of all creatures. Certainly this deliberation is implied by the solemn introduction "Let us make," which does not occur when about to call other creatures into being. It would seem that in the divine mind, or at least rhetorically in the thought of the writer of this account, the work of creation was approaching its climax, and a pause of deliberation is made before the greatest of all creatures is formed. Whether this accounts for the plurals or not, it signifies much for the dignity and honor of man, and marks him for a high career.

Man is said to be created in the image of God.

God's Image. Unquestionably the human body excels the bodies of any of the lower animals in organic perfection and in elegance and dignity of form, and in these respects it rises nearer to the divine excellence; but since God is a spirit, and is not known to have any bodily form, it is possible that the divine image does not refer to the human body at all. There is an evident similarity between the mind of man and that of God; for we have reason to believe that as the powers of the human mind may be classed as intellectual, emotional and volitional, so God thinks and feels and wills. The great difference lies in the extent of these powers. Man's ideas and emotions and volitions are weak and limited, while those of God are unlimited and infinite. It is because man's mind is ordered after the manner of the Creator's mind, that man is capable in some measure of knowing God, of receiving revelations of the divine will, and of yielding acceptable service to Him.

Man's Eminence. This account of man's creation records not only his excellence, but also the authority and dominion with which he was invested. It is said that he should fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over every living being on the earth. This emphasizes and confirms his likeness to the Creator. Man's authority points

to the high station for which he was designed, and marks a notable distinction between him and the animals below him. He has powers which they do not possess, a spiritual nature of which they are not heirs. They are merely his servants, ministering to his needs; while he is the real object of creation. They supply to man only a convenient environment, while his interests furnish the real purpose of the whole creative work.

This passage, therefore, has a very important Messianic significance. It is the basis of all Messianic purpose and prophecy. It is because man is made in God's image that he is capable of attaining to a Messianic glory that is worthy of the divine effort in his behalf. The powers of man were susceptible of divine training, were capable of sinning and reforming, were able to apprehend the divine good-will and good intention and to put forth an appropriate effort to reach the promised goal. Man was created for a march toward eternal life.

The fall of man did not so completely destroy the divine image as to preclude the prophetic value of that sacred likeness. In man's sin the beauty of this image has been marred by the loss of purity in character, loyalty to Jehovah, and intellectual and moral powers; but the ability to appreciate the good, to repent of the bad, and to seek the high destiny to which God points the human soul, has not been lost. These powers have been weakened, and in some instances their exercise has been suspended; but they are potential, and may be awakened by earnest appeals to the conscience and to the moral ambition of the soul. The fact that these powers may be brought into use is the highest proof that they have not been destroyed, and hence that the image of God has not been obliterated. The essential conditions of the Messianic effort still remain, and the hope of indefinite advancement under divine guidance may still be cherished.

3. *The Victory of the Race. Gen. iii. 14, 15.*

“And Jehovah God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, cursed are thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days

of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel."

The Setting. This prophecy is set in the circumstances of the fall. The serpent has deceived the woman, and both she and her husband have sinned. The serpent as the representative of moral evil and the powers of human seduction is cursed; while also upon the erring man and woman punishments are pronounced. It is a sad scene; and a dark, unknown future opens up before humanity. Labors and sorrows and disappointments are to multiply, and a deep-seated enmity between the posterity of the woman and the offspring of the serpent must fill all coming days with dread and grief. In the midst of this gloom there is just one ray of light, and that is the promise that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. What that might mean could not be fully known at the time, and never known until the victory of humanity over the powers of evil should be accomplished.

Bearing on Interpretation. The proper interpretation of this prophecy cannot be based wholly upon the circumstances under which it appears to arise. A literal struggle between man and serpents does not meet the moral emergency of the occasion. It certainly involved a future ethical struggle, in which man should sustain loss, but out of which he should emerge victorious. Yet how long this struggle should last, how serious the loss should be, and in what manner or to what extent the victory should be secured, are questions which the circumstances of the time must leave unanswered. If the prophecy be true, only the history of man could solve these mysteries.

The development of a divine plan of human redemption in Christ has furnished an interpretation laden with a deeper and richer meaning than any other that could be applicable to the language.* The long, sharp struggle with sin is a matter of record. The loss to man in point of honor, nobility of character

*"Her seed is the entire race of her descendants. But inasmuch as the serpent is represented as bruising the heel of the man, and is distinguished from his seed in God's direct address to him as *thou*, and the original tempter himself is thus to be the finally crushed and conquered

and almost every excellence of his nature has been seen in every generation. In spite of all this, God has operated through a long line of prophets and teachers, and finally through His own Son, to unfold a system of instruction, reformation and salvation which gradually is uplifting the race and promising to man a return to honor and God-likeness which must have seemed for ages impossible.* Thus the seed of the woman, which is the human race, is reaching its culmination in Christ, bruising the head of the great moral serpent; and the stroke is to be fatal and final.

4. *The Stability of the Earth. Gen. viii. 20-22; ix. 8-17.*

**The
Occasion.**

The time of this prophecy was when the patriarch Noah was offering sacrifices to Jehovah in the first acts of worship just after the deluge.

It is virtually a new beginning of the race, for from this one family the earth is to be repopulated. The future is to bring another test of human fortune; and it must be with some forebodings that man looks forward after having passed through the experiences of such a shipwreck on account of sin as that which had befallen the Adamic family. It would not be easy for Noah and his sons to shake off the question, Does humanity go forth only to meet another catastrophe and to be lost in another flood? It is the purpose of God to remove this dread and plant in the minds of men the idea of the permanance of the earth and the continued regularity of supplies to meet human wants. Without such a prospect, no Messianic prophecies could ever have value with the race; for if man is not to continue, or if the world is to be too unstable to afford him a permanent home and subsistence, he could not look forward with confidence to a distant accomplishment of the divine plan.

**The
Sacrifice.**

The "sweet savor" from Noah's sacrifice which the Lord is said to have smelled, is a beautiful poetic figure to express the divine favor in

foe, it seems to be necessary to think of the seed of the woman as culminating in an individual victor who is to be the champion of his race and gain the final victory over the serpent."—Briggs.

*Beautiful and apt are the words of Oehler (O. T. Theology, p. 54): "In the simple child-like form, that enmity shall be between man and

which the new race is now held. Sacrifice had undoubtedly been ordained of God, and Noah's obedience in this form of service commends him to the divine grace. Even the distinctions between the clean and the unclean animals had existed before the deluge; and if it were not originally commanded by Jehovah, it had at least according to our records received His approval (Gen. 7:1-3). At the time of so acceptable a service as this, a prophecy of blessing was most appropriate.

Special

Confirmation.

The prophecy was deemed so important as that it must have special confirmation. It was incorporated in a covenant made with Noah and with all flesh, and was to be perpetually signified by one of the most beautiful and widely distributed of nature's phenomena, the rainbow. While the bow in the cloud was not understood to be something new and beginning from that time, it was to have a new meaning as a reminder of God's promise. The prophecy itself marks a new era for man. Henceforth, while sin loses nothing of its hideousness and destructiveness, yet God's dealings with sinners in the future will differ from those in the past in this respect, that while He has hitherto destroyed man for disobedience, hereafter he will permit men to go on in their course without divine interruption, and God will work out in the midst of men a plan of human redemption.

The

Divine Plan.

The deluge, although it is not to be repeated, was neither unjust nor in vain. It served by one occurrence to impress effectually upon the minds of men the principle of retribution of sin. In various ways after this, the same truth was to be taught without overthrowing the populations of the earth; and at the same time the far more valuable lesson of reformation and forgiveness of sins was to be inculcated. Toward this higher aim the purpose of God points when he promises the stability of the world, and enters into perpetual covenant with man.

the serpent, the idea is expressed that a struggle shall exist between mankind and the principle of evil, and that man shall carry away from this combat wounds and injuries, while yet the victory cannot be doubtful. Thus in a few words, the whole course of the development of salvation is here exhibited in its germ; this is the seed-corn from which the whole history of salvation has grown."

5. *The Blessing of Shem. Gen. ix. 26, 27.*

“Cursed be Canaan;
 A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.
 Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Shem;
 And let Canaan be his servant.
 God enlarge Japheth,
 And let him dwell in the tents of Shem;
 And let Canaan be his servant.”

The Circumstances. The circumstances of this prophecy were the drunkenness and exposure of Noah, his disrespectful treatment by Ham and probably by Canaan, and his honorable treatment by Shem and Japheth. The occasion makes apparent the character and disposition of the sons, which were probably handed down to their descendants. While the prophecy was an immediate rebuke to Ham and Canaan, and a commendation of Shem and Japheth, the predictions have reference mainly to their posterity.

The Curse. The curse of servitude pronounced on Canaan was fulfilled in his descendants in their relation to Israel during many generations, as the history of Israel clearly reveals. Probably no other son of Ham was present at the time of the prophecy and as the other sons were to have little to do with the fortunes of the Semitic race, they are not mentioned in the prediction. Ham is not individually cursed, but the curse of his son reflected back a deep shame upon the father.

The Blessings. The most important part of this prophecy is the blessing of Shem. It consists in blessing Jehovah, and calling him the God of Shem. This implies that the true God would be served by Shem's posterity, and probably deserted by the other families. In the passage, “God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem,” some interpreters have understood “him” to be Japheth, which would mean let Japheth dwell in the tents of Shem; but this is improbable, since it would seem to make Japheth dependent upon Shem for a habitation, which would virtually turn Japheth's blessing into a curse. Japheth's dwelling in Shem's tents could hardly mean that Japheth was to become a learner of religious

truth from Shem, for dwelling in his tents would be a very obscure expression of that thought, and this again would make Japheth dependent upon his brother.

It is better to understand that it is God who is
Better View. to dwell in the tents of Shem. The passage is poetical; and according to the manner of Hebrew poetry, the line, "God enlarge Japheth," is parallel to the next line, "And let him dwell in the tents of Shem." The word "him" in the second line is parallel to "God" in the first line. In this sense the two lines express a blessing each for Japheth and Shem; God will enlarge Japheth, and will take up His abode with Shem. The enlargement can refer only to the greatness of population among the descendants of Japheth; and this has been abundantly fulfilled in the vast populations of Europe and Eastern Asia.

The presence of God with Shem has also been
How God perfectly fulfilled in the dealings of God with
With Shem. Israel. Dwelling in the tents of a people implies a very intimate and friendly relationship and companionship. Such intimacy has not existed between Japheth and Shem, but has existed between God and Shem. In the most intimate way the Hebrew records represent God as giving His laws to Israel, abiding in the tabernacle and temple, receiving the daily service and sacrifice of the people, announcing His numerous prophetic messages to them, and finally causing His own Son to dwell in their midst as one of their number. While this is the most natural view of the prophecy, it is the one fraught with a meaning the most significant and far-reaching. Any other interpretation seems unnatural, if not weak and insipid.

6. *The Abrahamic Promises and Covenants.*

On different occasions promises were made to
The Abraham, some parts of which are repeated from
Occasions. time to time, but which taken altogether make a considerable advance on the prophecies already discussed. It will be convenient to review these promises separately.

**In Ur of
the Chaldees.**

(1) At the time when Abram was called out of Ur of the Chaldees, he was told to go forth from his country and kindred to a land that God would show him; and the promise is thus expressed: "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Gen. 12:1-3. In this announcement Abram has the promise of a personal blessing, a great name, a national greatness and a blessed influence over all the other peoples of the earth.*

**On Arrival
in Canaan.**

(2) When Abram arrived in Canaan he was told to lift up his eyes and view the land in every direction; and the promises here are made in these words: "For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then may thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for unto thee will I give it." Here is a clear promise that the land of Canaan shall belong to the descendants of Abram, and that his posterity shall be innumerable.

**Before Fall
of Sodom.**

(3) Just before the destruction of Sodom, when Abram stood in the presence of Jehovah, and God was about to announce to him the impending catastrophe, Jehovah is represented as saying to Himself, "Shall I hide from Abram that which I do; seeing that Abram shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?" Gen. 18:17, 18. In this passage there is again clearly a foresight of the greatness of the nation which is to descend from this patriarch; and to this is added a repetition of the prophecy that in Abraham shall all the nations of the earth find a blessing.

*"The far-reaching extent, the certainty, and the definiteness of Abraham's view of the future were unexampled. There far back in the hazy dawn he stood while the morning mists hid the horizon from every other eye, and he alone discerns what is to be. One clear voice and one only rings out in unflinching tones and from the midst of the babel

**Before Birth
of Ishmael.**

(4) Before the birth of Ishmael Jehovah promised Abram that his own son should be his heir, and not his servant Eliezer; and he brought Abram forth, and said, "Look now toward heaven, and number the stars, if thou be able to number them: so shall thy seed be." At the same time Jehovah made the covenant with Abram, saying, "Unto thy seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." Gen. xv. These promises and the covenant were sealed by an offering of slain animals, the parts of which were separated into two rows, between which in the darkness of the evening God caused a smoking furnace and flaming torch to pass in Abram's sight. To the mind of an Oriental such a scene was a most solemn confirmation. On this occasion the promise of numerous posterity is renewed, and the future possession of the land of Canaan is made a part of a solemn covenant.

**Before Birth
of Isaac.**

(5) A short time before the birth of Isaac Jehovah appeared again to Abram, and told him that he should be the father of a multitude of nations, that he should no longer be called Abram (which means exalted father), but that he should be called Abraham (father of a multitude), that nations and kings should be among his people, and that he would establish an everlasting covenant with him and his posterity to give them the chosen land for an everlasting possession, while Jehovah was to be their God, and Abraham and his sons perpetually were to observe the rite of circumcision. To this was added the promise of the son Isaac and the establishment of this covenant with him. Gen. 17:1-21.

**When Offering
Isaac.**

(6) On the occasion of Abraham's obedience to the very trying command to offer up his son Isaac as a sacrifice, these words were addressed to him from heaven: "By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son,

of voices that utter either amazing follies or misdirected yearnings, gives the one true forecast and direction—the one living word which has separated itself from and survived all the prognostications of Chaldean soothsayers and priests of Ur, because it has never ceased to give life to men." Dods, Com. on Genesis, xii.

thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gates of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. 22:16-18. In this passage the promises to give a numerous posterity and a supremacy over adversaries are confirmed by the oath of the Lord. Here is also repeated the prophecy that in Abraham's seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed.

**Force of
The Promises.** The force of all these promises and predictions can be appreciated only by taking into account the importance of the call and covenants of Abraham. It is a turning point in the divine plan. Hitherto God has been dealing with humanity as a race; but henceforth He selects one family or nation through whom He may operate for the blessing of all. The nations are wayward and incorrigible. They must be permitted to run their courses in sin for a season, but they must not be altogether abandoned. God can best reach them by making one family the recipient of His choicest blessings, the possessors of a chosen land, and the almoners of a great ethical and spiritual fortune. When the other nations shall have learned by bitter experience the folly of sin, and when they shall have seen the inestimable advantages of serving Jehovah, they may be brought back through the agency of the Abrahamic people to righteousness and loyalty. This is the far-reaching purpose in calling Abraham and giving to him these rare and remarkable promises.

Reasons. Since Abraham was childless, and since a development of his faith in God was essential to the proposed plan, promises of offspring were made and yet delayed until the fulfilment could be accomplished only by miracle. This exercise of faith was the means of its cultivation. Since the Abrahamic people were to be separate from other nations and to be restrained from the immoralities and idolatry of the other peoples of the earth, it was necessary to assign to them a chosen land. In order that this people might be in position to exercise the greatest influence upon the other inhabitants of the

earth, the land was selected in a place where during the period of God's operation with Abraham's descendants they would be in the midst of the greatest nations of the earth. Here, as in the presence of all nations, was to be the theatre of Jehovah's magnificent efforts to save one people and through them to reach all the rest.

**Why Name
Changed.**

The change of Abram's name was significant. He was not to be simply an "exalted father," but to be the "father of a multitude;" and as this was one of the important features of the covenants, it was appropriate that the name should become a monument of the prediction. All later generations contemplating this change of name would be able to see how perfectly the promise to which it testified was being fulfilled. An advantage appears also in making a covenant with Abraham which should include his descendants. It would serve to bind Abraham to God by ties of duty and loyalty, and also serve to advertise God's determination and self-imposed obligation to secure through this family a blessing for the whole race. Thus Jehovah binds a people to Him, and at the same time enters into solemn contract to work out for humanity a benefit the value of which should be estimated in advance only by the honor and dignity of its sacred author.

**Scope of
Promises.**

The extent and importance of the promises and covenants are now to be understood only in the light of what Jehovah has done through Abraham for the world. It cannot be denied that through him and his descendants the purest and best religious ideas have been preserved and cultivated, that the most perfect system of moral law has been promulgated, that the most reasonable and elevating system of worship has been established, and that the most powerful motives to philanthropic work in the rescue and advancement of humanity have been secured. It is foolish to doubt that these were included in the divine purpose when these promises were made, and it is equally vain to assume that these ideas must have arisen at a later time than Abraham's day and are merely thrown back into the Abrahamic history by some remote Hebrew prophet, seeing that God is unquestionably the author

and promoter of the whole scheme which no generation of men could either invent or execute.*

**Messianic
Bearing.**

The Messianic bearing of these promises to Abraham will appear mainly in the following points: (1) One family is chosen out of the posterity of Shem, with whom Jehovah was to have His dwelling, and in this family all previous blessings are to be concentrated, so that the divine plan has become more definite and restricted than in any former prediction. (2) A definite land is pointed out, in which the future divine efforts are to have a specific location. (3) God enters into sealed covenant to favor this people and through them to bring a benefit to all others. (4) This covenant is to have perpetual force; and since it is confirmed by an oath, it is clearly not to be thwarted by the weaknesses and failings of men, but is laden with an unconditional blessing. (5) Inasmuch as the purpose of Jehovah as demonstrated by later developments clearly included the humanitarian work of Christ, the covenant itself must compass all those, whether Jew or Gentile, who are brought into a vital union with the Messiah. This justifies the conclusion reached by the apostle Paul, Gal. 3:29, "And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise." (6) The emphasis is finally laid on Abraham's seed, rather than himself, because the purpose behind the promise looked to an accomplishment in the distant future. The world would receive but little blessing from Abraham's personal career; but through the select nation and the Messiah all peoples were to be profoundly influenced. This is a remarkable reflection of that idea of universal victory which was promised to the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15); and yet there is presented

*Riehm's proposition, "What can be recognized only in the time of fulfilment is precisely what is not contained in the prophecy itself," is certainly true; but it is too indefinite to be practical. Riehm felt this, and hence added, "From this sense must not be omitted what the prophet apprehended only in vague presentiment, without clear consciousness. This presentiment belongs to the contents of the prophecy—of course, however, in the vagueness characteristic of all mere presentiment." In the Abrahamic promise and in many other prophecies, there is in vague form, in germ, the far-off Messianic content, that must have furnished little more than a presentiment to the prophet;

here a far more definite outline of that divine plan by which the victory should be secured.

(7) *The Promises to Isaac and Jacob.*

**Why Promises
Repeated.**

It was proper that the promises made to Abraham should be repeated to succeeding generations in the form of direct messages until they should become incorporated in a permanent institution. Only in this way could the devotion of the elect family to Jehovah and to His purpose be secured. Accordingly, Jehovah forbade Isaac to remove from Canaan into Egypt, and urged him to dwell in the land in which he lived, saying, "For unto thy seed will I give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swear unto Abraham, thy father, that I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these lands; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." Gen. 26:2-5. This is chiefly a repetition of the promises made to Abraham, and evidently designed to keep Isaac in the path of their fulfilment. In this statement the promises appear to be based on Abraham's obedience; but it is better to understand that it was the oath of God which was vouchsafed on the occasion of the patriarch's obedience. This was appropriate because a disobedient man would have been unfit to receive such an oath, and further, because this recognition of faithful obedience would tend to stimulate like obedience among Abraham's descendants. It is easy to see how salutary must have been the effect of this message to Isaac.

**Isaac's
Blessing.**

When Isaac was old and was about to bestow his chief paternal blessing upon one of his sons, Jacob came into his presence, and was blessed as follows:

and yet what that germ really contained can be seen only after the messianic development. It was clear to the prophet that God purposed something, but it remained for the future to unfold it and interpret it. See also the writer's *Principles of Interpretation*, pp. 236-7.

“God give thee of the dew of heaven,
 And of the fatness of the earth,
 And plenty of rain and new wine:
 Let peoples serve thee,
 And nations bow down to thee:
 Be lord over thy brethren,
 And let thy mother’s sons bow down to thee:
 Cursed be every one that curseth thee,
 And blessed be every one that blesseth thee.”

—Gen. 27:28, 29.

While this blessing makes no direct reference to the Abrahamic promise, yet it repeats some of the very language of that promise, and at the same time by announcing that Jacob’s kinsmen should bow down to him and that he should be lord over his brethren the leading promise which was to be fulfilled in Isaac is handed on to Jacob, and limited to his family. The supremacy here implied found not only a natural fulfilment in the reigns of David and Solomon when kindred nations were made subject to Israel, but also a deeper and greater spiritual fulfilment in the dominion of Christ over the hearts of men. Whatever may be said of the probability that this blessing should have so great a reach of meaning, it is certain that in that good providence which presided over the affairs of men these things have come to pass. It is difficult to see why, if these events were already in the divine purpose, which was selecting Isaac to these ends, they should not be thought to be included in the predictions whose wording is so perfectly suited to embrace them all.

Jacob’s Vision. At a later time when Jacob was hurrying from his father’s home to escape the wrath of his brother Esau, he had a vision at Luz, in which he saw in his dream a ladder extending from earth to heaven, and from above the ladder God spoke:

“I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thy liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee whithersoever thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.”
 Gen. 28:13-15.

This repeats part of the promise already made to Abraham and Isaac, and adds the promise to be with Jacob wherever he might go and to bring him back to the land of Canaan. The value of this additional promise appears in two considerations: (1) It would give Jacob confidence during his absence in a foreign land that he was in the divine care, which would tend to keep him faithful to God when he might be tempted to idolatry. (2) It would plainly signify to Jacob that he was not to make his permanent abode in Padam Aram, but in Canaan.

Jacob's Change of Name. On Jacob's return with his family and flocks when he was approaching the land of Canaan, the Lord wrestled with him by night, and at the last, after proving to Jacob by the withering touch of the divine finger, that he was indeed in a contest with God, He asks his name, "and he said Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for thou hast striven with God and men, and hast prevailed." Gen. 32:27, 28. A little later the statement concerning the change of name was repeated to Jacob, and the promises concerning his posterity and the possession of the land were renewed. The old name Jacob, meaning supplanter, had doubtless been in some measure appropriate to his former life; but it was very badly adapted to express the new relation that henceforth he and his descendants were to sustain toward God. The name Israel, meaning striver with God or soldier of God, was prophetic of the conflicts and conquests which Israel should afterwards have under Jehovah's direction. Whatever else this may include, it signified a future close relationship to God such as that which for many centuries the nation enjoyed. The name Jacob was almost exclusively the name of the patriarch himself, but the name Israel was more commonly the name of his people. In this way, it would seem, the writers of the Old Testament indicated their understanding that the new name was not intended for the father, but for his posterity.

(8) *The Blessing of Judah. Gen. xlix. 3-12.*

Blessing Stated. When Jacob was about to die he called together his sons to tell them what should befall them in the latter days. In speaking of Judah, he compares

him to a lion going up from the prey, and then adds, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be." The comparison of Judah to a lion is doubtless intended to signify both strength and royalty. The tribe of Judah became the largest of the twelve; for we are informed in Num. 2:4, 26, that the tribe of Judah numbered 74,600, and that the tribe of Dan was next in size with 62,700. Judah maintained remarkable strength throughout her history, and was the only tribe to return from the Babylonian exile with an appreciative number.

**When Scepter
Acquired.**

We cannot reasonably understand that the sceptre was acquired by Judah at the time when that tribe was appointed to lead the other tribes in the march of the people while they were in the wilderness under the direction of Moses (Num. 10:14); for at this time Judah had no sceptre, and even the great law-giver and leader of the people during that period was Moses of the tribe of Levi. Moses' successor, Joshua, was of the tribe of Ephraim (Num. 13:8); and the first king of Israel was Saul of the tribe of Benjamin (1 Sam. 9:1, 2). So that no great leader in Israel came from the tribe of Judah until David. In him the sceptre was vested in Judah, and in no proper sense was it removed from that tribe before it passed into the hands of the "Lion of the tribe of Judah." It is true that from the beginning of the Babylonian Exile to the coming of Christ David's successors did not exercise royal powers; but during all that time the Davidic family was kept distinct, and were the natural heirs of the throne. After Christ, at the destruction of Jerusalem, 70 A. D., the Davidic household was scattered, and was lost. Jesus, the ever-living representative of the Davidic family became by the decree of fortune, as well as by that of Jehovah, the only heir to that throne which in a prophecy later than this was said to be "established forever." It is difficult to compare this bold statement concerning the sceptre of Judah with the later history without the conviction that the hand of God which must have directed the fortunes of Israel also controlled the mind of the patriarch.

“Shiloh.” In the passage, “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until Shiloh come,” the meaning of Shiloh has awakened some variety of opinion.

Not a Place. (1) It is not probable that Shiloh here is the name of the city mentioned in 1 Samuel 4:3, 4; in which case the passage would mean “until he (Judah) come to Shiloh.” It is true that Judah led in the conquest of Canaan, and that the ark was located at Shiloh when the conquest was concluded; but this is not a circumstance of sufficient moment to have a reasonable place in the patriarch’s blessing. Moreover, if Jacob foresaw the coming to Shiloh with the ark, he should have foreseen also that Judah did not have a sceptre or ruler’s staff before reaching that place. Moses and Joshua, who belonged to other tribes, led the people to Shiloh. Besides this, no change of royalty occurred when they arrived at Shiloh, as the prophecy with this meaning would seem to imply.

Not Likely a Personal Name. (2) It is widely believed that “Shiloh” in this passage is the name of a person. Some have thought, since the names are similar and seem to have a common meaning (peace, peace-maker, or prince of peace), that Solomon may be meant. The author, however, that could have had Solomon in view should have known that there occurred no change of the sceptre in Solomon suited to the implication in this passage. Many have supposed that Shiloh is a name for Christ; but the following points are unfavorable to this view. (a) All the other predictions in this period, even those that are Messianic, are indefinite, and do not refer directly and personally to the Messiah. (b) Jesus is not elsewhere in the Bible called Shiloh. (c) None of the ancient versions of the Old Testament present Shiloh as a proper name. (d) A reference to an individual so far in advance as in this case would be unnatural and abrupt in a father’s blessing upon his son. While perhaps not one of these objections is decisive against the view that Shiloh is a proper name for the Messiah, nevertheless if another view that seems reasonable will escape these objections, it will certainly be preferable.

“He Whose It Is.” (3) The Hebrew wording of this passage will readily admit of the following translation: “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet until he comes whose it is.” While this refers to a future personage, it does so in an indefinite way that better comports with other prophecies of the age to which this belongs. With this translation the passage may still be Messianic; and if so, it has the important significance that the “Messiah is the One above all others to whom the sceptre of Judah and of all Israel belongs. He is the One whose it is by an inherent right. In this view it may be asked, What change of sceptre occurs in the fulfilment? It does not pass from the tribe of Judah to any other tribe, nor is it lost to Judah; but it passes up to the hand of Him to whom more than all others in Judah it belongs. It passes out of human control into the divine and from a temporal into a spiritual sphere.

An Exalted Meaning. Moreover, while the Messiah arose from Judah he does not belong exclusively to that tribe, as did most of the kings who held the sceptre in Judah, but he belongs to all Israel equally and to all the world. In this view Judah held the sceptre as her own until He came who was above Judah, universal and divine, and to whom the sceptre belonged, not as a gift, but as by personal and natural right. This is perhaps the highest sense in which the language could be understood. Shall we be content with a lower and less important signification? If this be a prophecy at all, which we can hardly deny, why should it not be taken at its best? If God was expressing His purpose for the future, why should He not express His highest purpose? And if the language is adapted to the highest purpose that we know that Jehovah may have entertained, why should we not interpret His words to cover that high intention? It seems reasonable that if God were telling of the good that He would give, He might also tell of the greatest good that He had to bestow, which was a regnant Lord.

9. *The Blessing of Joseph. Gen. xlix. 22-26.*

Question of Favoritism.

Joseph was doubtless a favorite son of Jacob, and we might naturally expect that the father would pronounce upon him the richest of bless-

ings, and in a material sense perhaps he did; but the gift of royalty assigned to Judah must be estimated above anything that Joseph was to enjoy. Jacob must be exonerated from favoritism, not only on the ground that Judah was not specially loved, but also that Benjamin who was held in the tenderest esteem by his father receives only an ordinary blessing. Moreover, there was good ground for a worthy blessing upon Joseph, seeing that his personal history evinces the most perfect character of all the twelve; and it is reasonable to believe that this character would in some measure be transmitted to his posterity, and so make them deserving of better things than many of their kinsmen.

The blessing reads as follows:

The "Joseph is a fruitful bough,
Blessing. A fruitful bough by a fountain;
 His branches run over the wall.
 The archers have sorely grieved him,
 And shot at him, and persecuted him;
 But his bow abode in strength,
 And the arms of his hands were made strong,
 By the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob.
 (From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel),
 Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee,
 And by the Almighty, who shall bless thee,
 With the blessings of the heaven above,
 Blessings of the deep that coucheth beneath,
 Blessings of the breast, and of the womb.
 The blessings of thy father
 Have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors
 Unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills;
 They shall be on the head of Joseph,
 And on the crown of the head of him that was separate from
 his brethren."

**Greatness of
 Blessing.**

It is evident that material blessings must abound in this oracle. Joseph is compared to a fruitful bough which luxuriantly grows over a wall. The heavens above and the deep beneath are to contribute their shares to his prosperity under the help of God. It seems remarkable, however, that the blessings of Joseph's father should be said to prevail above the blessings of his ancestors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; for the blessings of Isaac upon Jacob included these now pronounced upon

Joseph and others of very great importance (Gen. 27:28, 29). Another translation is possible, and seems far more reasonable, as follows: "The blessings of thy father have prevailed over the blessings of the ancient mountains, the desirable things of the everlasting hills," that is, greater than the blessings which the mountains and hills produce, such as grain, fruits, cattle, gold, silver or precious stones.

A Special Version. In this blessing the parenthetical statement, "From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel," is most remarkable. Some have understood the Hebrew to mean "by the name of the shepherd" instead of "from thence is the shepherd." While this is a possible reading of the original text, the sense is less satisfactory. "By the name" would mean "by the help" of God, who must in this case be the "shepherd over the stone of Israel" at Bethel (Gen. 28:18; 35:14). The whole conception appears to be awkward and weak, and is therefore unacceptable if a more reasonable sense may be assigned to the language.

Who the "Shepherd?" It seems better to translate as in the Revised English Bible, "From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel;" and this means that the arms of Joseph were made strong by the hands of the Mighty One, from whom comes the shepherd who is also the stone of Israel. It is not probable that Joseph is the shepherd, although he fed Israel in Egypt; for it is incongruous to refer to Joseph thus in his own blessing, and especially when apparently describing the Mighty One. Nor is it possible that the shepherd is Joshua who led Israel into the pastures of Canaan, although Joshua was a descendant of Joseph through Ephraim (Num. 13:8); for here the shepherd is from the Mighty One, which was no more true of Joshua than of Moses, Samuel, or any other great leader of the people. The words better suit the Messiah, who came forth from the Mighty One, and became the "good Shepherd" (John 10:11-16). The Messiah also may be well called "the stone of Israel," either in the sense of protector like a great stone in a desert, or in the sense of being the permanent, enduring One. He is called in 1 Peter 2:6 the "chief corner stone, elect,

precious;" but it is not certain that this figure is appropriate in so early a prophecy as this.

Indefinite Character of the Prophecy. It is notable that if we allow a Messianic reference in this passage, the prophecy still has that indefiniteness which is characteristic of all the early Messianic predictions. These prophecies point forward to a coming One, and hint at some of his offices, but do not announce his name. They serve to awaken hope in Israel, to record Jehovah's interest in his people and to indicate some glorious period when Israel shall be led by One who shall come forth from God, and therefore be His direct representative.

SUMMARY.

Items of Prediction.

The more important features of the prophecies of the Patriarchal Period may be briefly summed up as follows:

1. The fundamental condition of God's purposes respecting man and of all divine prophecy is laid in the creation of man in the image of his Maker. The natural endowments of man, his ability to know God and to understand His character and will, and his power of indefinite advancement in point of intelligence and usefulness, are indispensable qualifications for that high end to which all Hebrew prophecy points mankind.
2. At first a broad promise is given to the race that it shall overcome sin, and so prevail against its first and greatest enemy. This victory is to be achieved by a representative of the race itself; so that while by humanity the fall occurred, also by humanity deliverance shall be brought about.
3. In the blessing of Shem is given the first limitation of the divine work to a certain division of humanity; but it is intensified by the promise that in some sense which the future must unfold God is to dwell with the Semitic people.
4. In the covenants and promises to Abraham the field of God's special work is again restricted to one family, while the other nations are left to pursue their own course until they may be reached by an overflow of blessing which shall be poured out upon the Abrahamic household. In this prophecy a notable

method of the divine plan appears in the choice which God makes of a small portion of the race to serve as His intermediaries and agents to save the rest.

5. In the blessing of Judah royalty is conferred upon one tribe, so that while the other tribes remain within the circle of special blessing, the God-given sceptre is promised to Judah alone. This regal power is to remain in this tribe until some consummation or tribal destiny shall be reached, when it shall pass into the hands of one who shall hold it by right of his own.

6. From the Mighty One shall come forth a Shepherd, who in the eye of prophecy is easily distinguished from all others who might bestow their care upon the Israelitish flock, and who at the same time shall be as a stone for permanence or for protection.

7. In many passages the guidance of the chosen people, their divinely selected country and their peculiar prosperity, without all of which God's purpose could not be accomplished through them, are predicted.

**General
Character of
the Period.**

In this first period of prophecy the development of Jehovah's design to save the world through a select agency and by a divine-human leadership makes considerable advancement. It is a great beginning, rich with promise, suited to fill the chosen people with eager expectation, and well worthy of the great events which through long ages shall slowly unfold for the admiration and blessing of all mankind.

CHAPTER II.

MOSAIC PROPHECIES.

1. *Israel's Adoption. Ex. iv. 22, 23; Deut. xxxii. 6-10.*

**The
Prophecy.** After the Israelites had been bond-servants in Egypt for many generations, Moses was called by Jehovah to go from the wilderness of Sinai to Pharaoh and demand a release of the people. Jehovah instructed Moses to speak to Pharaoh these words, "Thus saith Jehovah, Israel is my son, my first-born: and I have said unto thee, Let my son go, and he may serve me; and thou hast refused to let him go: behold, I will slay thy son, thy first-born." A reflection of this thought appears in the Song of Moses (Deut. 32:6, 8, 9):

"Do ye thus requite Jehovah,
O foolish people and unwise?
Is not he thy father that hath bought thee?
He hath made thee and established thee * * *
When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance,
When he separated the children of men,
He set bounds of the peoples
According to the number of the children of Israel.
For Jehovah's portion is his people;
Jacob is the lot of his inheritance."

**The
Meaning.** From these passages it is evident that Israel is Jehovah's son in two senses: First, he is a son by creation, and Israel is reminded on this ground that he owes obedience and faithful service to the Lord as to a father. Secondly, Israel is Jehovah's son by adoption: for when the Lord made a separation among the nations in Abraham, he chose Israel for the special object of his care.

**Messianic
Value.**

The Messianic value of these passages lies in the implied purpose of the adoption. An adoption might be a blessing or a curse to a child according as the foster-father might have good or evil designs. What the designs may be in any case may be hidden from the child and from all others, except the father himself. When this is true, only the future can reveal how much of weal or woe the adoption may mean. Just so in the adoption of Israel; for in announcing this adoption Jehovah does not proclaim His purpose, but leaves it to be unfolded to coming generations. The interpreter at the present time stands in the position that a person once adopted occupies when he has grown old. He is able to look back upon all his experiences under the parental care, and is able to estimate the value of the nurture, admonitions and gifts of the foster-father. We may estimate the meaning of this prophetic statement only in the light of Israel's discipline and blessing. It follows from this that all of the good that God has bestowed upon Israel under His especial guidance and care, including the Messiah and all Messianic favors, whether for Israel alone or for Israel to share with other nations, is comprehended in this announcement.

**Principle of
Interpretation.**

We thus have here a prophecy, like many others of this period, germinal and indistinct, and yet freighted with promise of incalculable benefits. It is no more possible to interpret such an utterance wholly in the light of the time and of the circumstances under which it may have been uttered, than it is to determine the value of a bud on an unknown tree before the bud has opened into bloom and developed into fruit. If the passage is true at all, it is prophetic and may be interpreted only in the light of later events. If it could be established that the utterance is not at all divine, but merely the dream of some human author who wished simply to flatter his people, the case would be otherwise, and the meaning wholly different. The method of interpretation, therefore, must turn on the question whether or not Jehovah has spoken and also wrought marvelous things through Israel as He has not wrought through any other people.

2. *Israel's National Character. Ex. xix. 3-6.***The
Prediction.**

After the removal of Israel from Egypt and their encampment at Mount Sinai, Jehovah told Moses to say to Israel:

“Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then shall ye be mine own possession from among all peoples; for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

These words present the terms of a special covenant between God and Israel, which the people on that occasion agreed to fulfil. It is certain that the nation did not perform its part of the agreement; nevertheless, this record of stipulations serves to indicate clearly Jehovah’s purpose toward Israel, and later history must show to what extent He was able to accomplish His good intention.

The**“Possession.”**

(1) It is evident that God took Israel under

His immediate care, and so made that people His “own possession.” He gave them his laws, instructed them in the proper methods of worship, and favored them with prophetic advice and direction, until the coming of the Messiah in their midst, which was the most decisive mark of His peculiar attention to them. Repeatedly in later prophecies the idea that Israel rather than any other nation belongs to God is urged upon the people with earnest argumentation.

**The “Kingdom
of Priests.”**

(2) Israel is here promised the honor of be-

coming a “kingdom of priests.” As a priest stands between his people and God, and offers sacrifices for himself and the people; so Israel was to stand between other nations and God and bring about a sacrifice by which all men might secure divine approbation. To a very large extent during the history of Israel the nation acted as an intermediary between Jehovah and heathen peoples. Almost all nations learned something from Israel concerning law or worship or allegiance to Jehovah; and frequently the messages of prophets, like that of Jonah, were sent directly to the nations. Much

more in Christ the priestly work of Israel for all the world is apparent. Out of the midst of that chosen nation arose the one great sacrificial offering by which the sins of the whole world might be expiated.

The "Holy
Nation."

(3) Israel was also to be a "holy nation." This means that they were called to a righteous life, and set apart to the service of Jehovah. It would not be possible for Israel effectively to bring other nations to serve the one true God unless she engaged devoutly in that service herself. Besides this, a wicked and dissolute life would disqualify the nation for the priestly office; for vile and disreputable priests, like the sons of Eli, could win no acceptance with Jehovah nor commend His service to men. But if Jehovah calls such a nation to a separate service unto Himself, and requires that they shall devote their lives to righteousness, it will be necessary that He instruct them concerning His will. In this way the whole future effort of God to train Israel for holy living and acceptable service is implied. All of God's later dealings with the nation including His final act of bringing His own Son into their midst are foreshadowed in the stipulations of this covenant.

3. *Balaam's Blessings.*

The
Occasion.

A short time before Israel was ready to cross the Jordan into Canaan, and after they had defeated the armies of various nations on the east of the Jordan, Balak, the king of Moab, was greatly frightened lest the Israelites should take away his land as they had taken the lands of other kings. Since he was unable to muster an army sufficiently great to meet the hosts of Israel, and because he feared the overwhelming power of Israel's God, he conceived the plan of attempting to secure Jehovah's curse upon the Israelites through a prophet of Jehovah. But he must engage a prophet that had little national sympathy with Israel, and hence he must belong to another people. So he sent to Mesopotamia, beyond the river Euphrates, to hire Balaam who must have been well known

as a prophet of the same God that Israel served; for had he been a prophet of some other divinity, he could have little hope of a hearing by Jehovah. Balak sent messengers with gifts to the prophet to employ him to come and curse the people whom he dreaded; but Balaam first consulted Jehovah, and was told not to go, and hence refused. When the messengers returned, Balak sent a second deputation to the prophet with greater gifts and promises of promotion. Again Balaam consults Jehovah, and is told to go, but to speak only what Jehovah should give him. He goes fully aware of the fact that he is acting under divine protest which he seeks to overcome, that he may receive the promised rewards. Balaam had probably not been a bad man, otherwise it may be presumed that he could not have enjoyed the prophetic gift; but now under a very strong temptation he reveals a weakness which under circumstances less critical might have disqualified him to deliver a divine message, but which for the sake of overruling a curse and converting it into a blessing is in this instance not permitted to preclude the delivery of an oracle.

First

Blessing.

(1) Before attempting to secure a message, twice seven offerings are presented to Jehovah on seven altars, to obtain in advance the favor of God. Balak and his nobles were left standing by the altar while the prophet retired to a bare height on the mountain to meet the Lord, who gave him the following message which he carried back to the king of Moab:

“From Aram hath Balak brought me,
The king of Moab from the mountains of the East:
Come, curse me Jacob,
And come, defy Israel.
How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed?
And how shall I defy, whom Jehovah hath not defied?
For from the top of the rocks I see him,
And from the hills I behold him:
Lo, it is a people that dwelleth alone,
And shall not be reckoned among the nations.
Who can count the dust of Jacob,
Or number the fourth part of Israel?
Let me die the death of the righteous,
And let my last end be like his!” Num. 23:7-10.

Three important elements of blessing seem to appear in this

passage. (a) Israel is a distinguished people, not to be reckoned among other nations. (b) They are to be innumerable, the fourth part of them may not be counted. (c) They are to be a righteous people, so that one might well wish that the end of his life might be as honorable as theirs. These prophecies indefinitely point forward to a successful and honorable career for the nation. Balaam, though a stranger to Israel, utters predictions remarkably in keeping with all those that have gone before and with all of Israel's later experiences.

**Second
Blessing.**

(2) The king was sorely disappointed with the prediction that his hired prophet had made, and thinking that perhaps a full view of Israel's large encampment had influenced the message, he requested Balaam to go to another place where he should see only a part of the Israelites. After new offerings were made, and the prophet had gone aside again to receive his word, he delivered to Balak the following:

“Rise up, Balak, and hear;
Hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor:
God is not a man, that he should lie,
Neither the son of man, that he should repent:
Hath he said, and will he not do it?
Or hath he spoken, and will he not make it good?
Behold, I have received commandment to bless:
And he hath blessed, and cannot reverse it.
He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob;
Neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel:
Jehovah his God is with him,
And the shout of a king is among them.
God bringeth them forth out of Egypt;
He hath as it were the strength of the wild-ox.
Surely there is no enchantment with Jacob;
Neither is there any divination with Israel:
Now shall it be said of Jacob and of Israel,
What hath God wrought!
Behold, the people riseth up as a lioness,
And as a lion doth he lift himself up:
He shall not lie down until he eat of the prey,
And drink the blood of the slain.” Num. 23:18-24.

This blessing is parallel with that upon Shem in this respect that it announces that Jehovah is with Israel; and at the same

time it makes an advance by announcing that both royalty and strength are to belong to this people. Probably the language is intended to imply that God is to be their king, and is to supply their strength. On this account divination cannot avail anything against Israel.

Third Blessing. (3) The deep determination of Balak to evoke a curse upon Israel is shown in a third attempt by sacrifices and by the prophet's effort to secure the favor of God against his enemy. The result is a third blessing.

“How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob,
Thy tabernacles, O Israel!
As valleys are they spread forth,
As gardens by the river-side,
As lign-aloes which Jehovah hath planted,
As cedar-trees beside the waters.
Water shall flow from his buckets,
And his seed shall be in many waters.
And his king shall be higher than Agag,
And his kingdom shall be exalted.
God bringeth him forth out of Egypt;
He hath as it were the strength of the wild-ox:
He shall eat up the nations his adversaries,
And shall break their bones in pieces,
And smite them through with his arrows.
He couched, he lay down as a lion,
And as a lioness; who shall rouse him up?
Blessed be every one that blesseth thee,
And cursed be every one that curseth thee.” Num. 24:5-9.

This utterance clearly foretells two advantages to this people, prosperity and victory. The prosperity includes a great increase of Israel's population, and consequently a spreading abroad of their habitation till their people shall be found in all parts of the world. It also includes the exaltation of their king and kingdom. Their victories are to consume their adversaries, so that it will be a blessing to bless Israel and a curse to curse them.

Fourth Blessing. (4) The king was very angry with the prophet, because that three times he had blessed Israel when he was requested to curse them; and therefore he bids him to flee in haste to his home. Balaam, however, pauses long enough, not only to tell the king that he could

do nothing else than what Jehovah required, but also to give him a fourth oracle concerning these remarkable strangers. Concerning them he says:

“Balaam the son of Beor saith,
 And the man whose eye was closed saith;
 He saith, who heareth the words of God,
 And knoweth the knowledge of the Most High,
 Who seeth the vision of the Almighty,
 Falling down, and having his eyes open:
 I see him, but not now;
 I behold him, but not nigh.
 There shall come forth a star out of Jacob,
 And a sceptre shall rise out of Israel,
 And shall smite through the corners of Moab,
 And break down all the sons of tumult.
 And Edom shall be a possession,
 Seir also shall be a possession, who were his enemies;
 While Israel doeth valiantly.
 And out of Jacob shall one have dominion,
 And shall destroy the remnant from the city.” Num. 24:15-19.

In this statement the prophecy advances farther than in any of the preceding utterances of Balaam. The prophet declares that his vision relates to the future; for he says, “I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not nigh.” The “star out of Jacob” most naturally relates to some personage, and the next clause that a “sceptre shall rise out of Israel,” seems to imply that the “star” is to be a royal personage. To him also shall victory and conquest be given, so that “out of Jacob shall one have dominion.”

Who the Royal Personage. Who this coming personage may be, is by no means easy to determine. No person of a really royal character arose before the beginning of the monarchy under Saul, and he was too conspicuous a failure as compared with David and others to be regarded in this connection. Much more likely the prophetic eye might have rested upon David, who by conquest and by a long and successful reign rose to a distinction in Israel that might well entitle him to be called a “star out of Jacob.” He also well fulfilled the prediction about smiting Moab: for in 2 Samuel 8:2 it is recorded that David smote Moab, and that the Moabites became his servants and brought him tribute. Nevertheless, taking into account the

glory of Solomon's reign and the fact that Moab was smitten by other kings of Judah, it does not by any means seem assured that David is sufficiently conspicuous in Israel's history to be singled out as a star outshining all others. Many interpreters apply this prophecy directly to the Messiah. Assuredly no royal character in the earlier history of Israel was comparable to the Son of Mary; and his conquest and dominion far exceed those of David and his royal successors.

**Davidic
Dynasty.**

It is not impossible that in the long reach of prophetic vision, if we are permitted to widen the prophet's horizon to include the Messiah, David with all his dynasty embracing the Messiah may have been foreseen as but one glorious personage. In this case the prophecy was partially fulfilled in the conquest and sovereignty of David and his immediate successors, but found its ultimate and most worthy fulfilment in "David's greater Son." The Star of Bethlehem is in every respect the brightest star in Israel's history, and the conquest of the world upon which christianity has entered far outclasses the successes of David's sword. If the account of Balaam be true, that Jehovah overruled his prophetic efforts and delivered the message concerning the future, there remains little ground upon which to base a doubt that Jehovah here foretold the greatest one whom it was His purpose to raise up from among the Israelitish people.

4. *The Covenant of Everlasting Priesthood. Num. xxv. 12, 13.*

**The
Prediction.**

While Israel was still encamped on the borders of Moab, the people were tempted to fall into the sins of this heathen nation. What Balak could not accomplish through a mercenary prophet, he had opportunity to do through allurements to vice. On an occasion of a grievous sin in the camp, Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron the high priest, seized a spear, and put the guilty persons to death. It was a heroic deed, and saved Israel in a great moral crisis. In recognition of this service Jehovah gave this message to Moses concerning Phinehas:

“Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: and it shall be unto him, and to his seed after him, the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was jealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel.”

Fulfilment.

At this time Eleazar, the father of Phinehas, was high priest; and the house of Phinehas held that office (Jud. 20:28) until for some unknown reason it passed into the hand of Eli, who was not a descendant of Eleazar, but of Eleazar's brother Ithamar; for Abiathar, who was clearly a descendant of Eli (1 Ki. 2:27), had a son, Ahimelech, who is said to have been “of the sons of Ithamar” (2 Sam. 8:17; I Chr. 24:3). This family of Ithamar was ejected from the priestly office by Solomon (1 Ki. 2:27), and the high-priesthood passed again to the family of Phinehas in the person of Zadok (1 Ki. 2:35); and there is no reason to doubt that this family retained the office until the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman army, A. D. 70. In this way the covenant and prophecy concerning Phinehas was fulfilled.

Messianic Bearing.

Inasmuch as the Messiah did not descend from the priestly line, and did not even belong to the tribe of Levi, which included the whole priestly order, it may be asked, What place has this prophecy among Messianic predictions? We may answer that it announces a long line of priestly work that prepared for the greater priestly office of the Christ. The work of the Hebrew priests taught the people the principles of sin and sacrifice, the relation of the shedding of blood to remission, and the necessity of a priestly mediation between man and God. A knowledge of these fundamental matters was essential to an adequate conception of the Messianic work for man. While Jesus did not belong to the priestly family, he became the one high priest of the Christian age. Providentially the Aaronic priesthood passed away in the fall of Jerusalem about the time that the priesthood of Christ began to be appreciated. Probably the family of Aaron has either become extinct or has lost its identity, so that a restoration of the old Jewish priesthood will be henceforth impossible; but Christ remains forever a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

5. *The Prophet Like Moses. Deut. xvi 15-19.***The
Utterance.**

The form of the law with which this utterance is connected anticipates the conquest of Canaan and the danger that the people of Israel will imitate the abominations of the Canaanites. Especially in this place a warning is given against consulting diviners and other like classes of false prophets. It is in contrast with these diviners that the following promise of a true prophet is made:

"Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; according to all that thou desiredst of Jehovah thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of Jehovah my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And Jehovah said unto me, They have well said that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him."

**Prophetic
Class.**

This passage implies that Israel felt the need of a prophet to mediate between them and God, so that they might not be compelled to receive messages directly from the divine hand. The prophecy appears to promise just what will meet this demand. If this be true, there would seem to be some reason for understanding the prophecy to mean that Jehovah will raise up for Israel a series or class of prophets, who from time to time will give to the people the oracles of God, so that they may not need to consult wizards and necromancers to obtain divine counsel. This view regards the word "prophet" as a generic or class noun, like "seed" (Gen. 3:15), or "inhabitant" (Micah 1:13). This view seems to be confirmed by the fact that much of the earlier prophecies is generic and indefinite, and by the fact that the Israelites needed prophetic help after the death of Moses and a long line of prophets were raised up to meet that need.

**Messianic
Interpretation.**

Other interpreters prefer to regard the word "prophet" as a specific term referring to but one person, the Messiah. In favor of this view the following facts are urged: (a) The word "prophet" is not

elsewhere used in a generic sense bearing a collective idea, and therefore it is probably not so used here. (b) The prophet is here compared to Moses individually, and hence is likely used in an individual sense. (c) The New Testament writers often apply this prophecy to the Messiah (Acts 3:22, 23; 7:37; possibly also John 4:25; 5:45-47; 7:40). These passages make it clear that the apostles understood this prophecy to relate to Jesus.

Typical Interpretation. Others understand that the word "prophet" is to be taken individually, but that it refers to any one of the prophets raised up in Old Testament times, who was a type of Christ, and that the ultimate fulfilment centers in the Messiah himself. This view accords (a) with the contrast between the diviners and the promised prophet, (b) with the need that the people had for a prophet after the death of Moses, (c) with the fact that the word prophet is generally used in an individual sense, and (d) with the fact that the New Testament writers unhesitatingly apply this prophecy to the Messiah. It is true that the apostles of Jesus do not allude to the typical character of the earlier prophets; but it must not be overlooked that the typologies set forth in the New Testament were among the later writings of the apostles, and that in their earlier activities they had occasion to use Old Testament passages in their most direct bearing upon their argument with the Jews that Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures.

Objection Answered. It is not a valid objection to this view that no other prophet than the Messiah was "like Moses." It is true that the other prophets were not deliverers of their people, nor notable lawgivers, nor authoritative rulers of the nation; but this prophecy does not necessarily contemplate a prophet like Moses in all these respects, but simply in regard to prophetic labors. Samuel, Elijah, Isaiah and many others were like Moses so far as Moses' prophetic office extended. In them was fulfilled the promise here made, "I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak all that I shall command him." The same thing was true of Jesus; and we are hardly at liberty to refer this scripture to him on account of any other offices in which he was like Moses than this one, his pro-

phetic authority. It is certain that in this respect, however, he is the foremost and highest of all those who succeeded the great teacher of the wilderness.

SUMMARY.

Particular Features.

In summing up the Messianic features of prophecy in the Mosaic period, we may note the following as among the most important.

1. The nation of Israel is adopted by Jehovah, to be brought up as His son, and hence to receive a father's care, admonitions and guidance, so as to accomplish some end which must be worthy of Jehovah, but which only the later history must indicate.

2. This nation is to be holy in character and priestly in office; for it is to stand between other nations and God, to offer up an acceptable sacrifice for itself and for them.

3. The nation is to be innumerable; is to have a king, a sceptre, and a star who shall rise out of Jacob; and to enjoy a God-given victory over its adversaries. These might be political or spiritual favors; but taken in their broadest reach and highest sense on the ground that they are the utterances of Jehovah, we may understand both the political and the spiritual blessing to be intended.

4. A priestly family is definitely selected to minister before Jehovah perpetually in the midst of Israel, thus setting forth a continuous lesson on the relation of sacrifice to sin and the necessity of the shedding of blood for the remission of sins, so that the final and greatest sacrifice for man might be duly appreciated when it should be offered.

5. God will from time to time raise up a prophet with whom He will communicate freely as He did with Moses, and he shall be vested with authority to advise the people respecting the divine will.

The General Idea.

In this period the national idea is largely developed in the prophecy, doubtless because it was the time in which the foundations of the nation were being laid. It was therefore the most appropriate sea-

son to use national imagery to express the prophetic thought, and it was a suitable time to instruct the people in regard to the importance of their national character in the purpose of Jehovah. It was likewise a fit time to establish a priestly order and to declare the perpetuity of their work.

CHAPTER III.

DAVIDIC PROPHECIES.

Authorship. Not all of the predictions of this period were uttered by David; but they begin with that turning point in Israel's history, the birth of Samuel, when the period of the judges was hastening to its close, and the monarchy was being ushered in. The kingship of David was the objective point in the history of this time, and the prophecies uttered by him and concerning his family are the leading predictions of this group.

1. *The Faithful Priesthood.* 1 Sam. ii. 35, 36.

Occasion. When the sons of Eli the priest had become so wicked that their services at the tabernacle were an abomination to God and to man, a prophet came to Eli to rebuke him for permitting his sons to dishonor the priestly office, and to announce to him that the office should be taken from them, and that the family should be overtaken by weakness and want. After foretelling that Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, should both die in one day, the prophet adds:

"And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in my heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed forever. And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thy house shall come and bow down to him for a piece of silver and a loaf of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a morsel of bread."

Persons Involved. It will be remembered that Eli belonged to the house of Ithamar, and not to that of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar. This prediction is therefore in perfect accord with that concerning Phinehas which promised that his house should have the priesthood

perpetually. The "sure house" clearly means a house that would surely retain the priesthood as in contrast with the house of Eli which should lose that position. It can hardly be doubted that the house of Phinehas which came again into office in the person of Zadok (1 Ki. 2:35) is the object of this prophecy. The suggestion that Samuel's family is here meant seems to have little support, not only because Samuel did not belong to the family of Aaron (1 Chr. vi), but also because his priestly work was very limited, if indeed he did not offer sacrifices only by the hands of the regular priests to whom he merely gave directions. His sons became judges (1 Sam. 8:1), not priests, and we do not know that his descendants at any time occupied the priestly office.

**How
Messianic.**

It is here predicted that the priest "shall walk before mine anointed forever," which seems to mean that the prophet already anticipates the anointing of kings to rule over Israel, and that the priesthood and royalty should continue together indefinitely. It is certainly true in the history of the people that so long as they had a king they had also priests, and that from the resumption of the priestly office by the house of Phinehas a priest of that house was ever available while the monarchy remained. The word "forever" probably means indefinitely, or as long as the kingdom and priesthood should continue. This word generally means "for an age," and its extent depends upon the length of the age. If the age be endless, the word signifies an eternal duration. This prophecy is Messianic only in the same sense in which the former prophecy concerning Phinehas points to a preparation for the greater Messianic priesthood.

2. *The Covenant with David.* 2 Sam. vii. 11-16; xxiii. 1-7; 1 Chr. xvii. 10-14.

**Covenant
Stated.**

It was a time in David's reign when there came a period of rest from his early wars with surrounding nations, that David thought that since he had built a costly home for himself, he ought also to build a house for Jehovah. A message came to the prophet

Nathan for David reviewing his call from obscurity to be king of Israel and the help that he had received from Jehovah by which he had been successful in war, and promising that he should have a great name and that his people should be permanently planted in their place; and then is added the following notable prediction:

"Moreover Jehovah telleth thee that Jehovah will make thee a house. When thy days are fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, that shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father and he shall be my son: if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men; but my lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever."

David is here informed that Jehovah will make him a house; and clearly the house that is to be made for David is here placed in antithesis to the house that David thought to build for Jehovah. Usually such an antithesis would indicate that the houses were of like character; but since Jehovah was certainly not promising to erect a material building for David, but David was planning to construct a material house for Jehovah, the houses must be different in kind. The later statements, "I will set up thy seed after thee * * * and I will establish his kingdom;" and "thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure forever before thee," indicate that David's house which Jehovah was to make sure was his family as perpetual heirs of royalty. If this be correct, the word "seed" must include more than one descendant of David; and this is confirmed by the prediction, "He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." It is certain that Solomon built the temple to the name of Jehovah, and it is most reasonable that these words are uttered in anticipation of that event. That the "seed" does not refer immediately and only to the Messiah is clear from the added prediction, "If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men." These words would not be spoken if no other than the Messiah were in mind.

**The
"Throne."** Jehovah is also to establish the throne of David's kingdom forever, which seems to include the Messianic kingdom, for the political kingdom of David came to an inglorious end. This is confirmed by the fact that both the house and the kingdom were to be made sure, and only in Christ have the two been perpetuated. It is notable that throughout the prophecy every reference to the "seed" or future king is put in the singular number, while in history one king succeeded another through a long line, and the Messiah was the last of David's descendants that attained to royalty. While the singular number might be used for vividness, it may be far more significant. Each individual king that sat upon the throne of David may be regarded as fulfilling the prediction in part, and each one at the same time was a type of the Messiah, in whom at last the ultimate and complete fulfilment rests. The throne of Christ therefore is but a continuation and exaltation of the throne of David. Since the Messiah was to partake of our humanity in his nature, it was most appropriate that he should partake also of the most worthy of human offices and relations. His union with the race is closer, his fellowship with us is more intimate, and in him our race rises to greater dignity, by his exalting the throne of David so that it becomes the throne of His own infinite glory.

The "Son." There is likewise an appropriateness in the use of the word "son," which is to be applied first to Solomon and his successors to whom God granted His fatherly care, mercy and guidance; but is to be applied last of all to the Messiah who is the incarnate, but none the less real, Son of God. Thus sonship rises from the human to that combination of humanity and divinity that has been presented to us in the Savior of the world. Here again he carries up our humanity into the higher realm of his own glorious person.

**The "Sure
Mercies."** The statement in this prophecy, "My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee," is a promise that the family of David should not lose its title to the throne, but that so long as there should be royalty in Israel it should belong to David's house. In this sense in later prophecy the expression,

“the sure mercies of David,” is used (Isa. 55:3); and in Acts 13:34, Paul refers to the resurrection of Christ, and quotes in confirmation of it, “I will give you the holy and sure mercies of David.” These scriptures imply that the promises made to David through Nathan at this time were unconditional, and therefore certain of fulfilment. If any descendant of David on the throne should prove disobedient, Jehovah would punish him, but the family was not to lose its royalty. It is true historically that from the beginning of the Babylonian Exile to the coming of Christ the house of David did not exercise sovereignty; but the family remained heirs of the throne during that interval, and they were ready at any time when the conditions of the Jews should be favorable to resume their royal functions. Unfortunately the moral condition of the Jews did not justify the honor which they would have enjoyed in the return of David’s descendants to kingly power. It was reserved for the Messiah completely to fulfil the promise concerning the established throne and the everlasting kingdom.

This prophecy is an advance upon those which have gone before in at least three points. (1) **New Prophetic Elements.** The Messianic king and throne which had already been promised to Judah in his father’s blessing, are now limited to one family in the tribe of Judah, the family of David; and this limitation is to be perpetual. (2) The royal family is to build a temple to the name of Jehovah; and this may primarily refer to Solomon’s temple, and yet ultimately to that greater temple to be founded by the last and greatest Davidic ruler, the church of Christ. (3) In the words, “He shall be my son,” the sonship in Israel, while not removed from the nation, is emphasized and centered in the family of David to rest finally upon him whose throne is established forever.

3. *The Messianic King and Priest. Psalm cx.*

“Jehovah saith unto my lord,
 Sit thou at my right hand,
 Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.
 Jehovah will send forth the rod of thy strength out of Zion:
 Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.
 Thy people offer themselves willingly

In the day of thy power, in holy array:
 Out of the womb of the morning
 Thou hast the dew of thy youth.

“Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent:
 Thou art a priest forever
 After the order of Melchizedek.
 The Lord at thy right hand
 Will strike through kings in the day of his wrath.
 He will judge among the nations,
 He will fill the places with dead bodies;
 He will strike through the head in many countries.
 He will drink of the brook in the way:
 Therefore will he lift up the head.”

Meaning of “My Lord.” The meaning of the expression “my Lord” is held in some doubt among biblical scholars. An interpretation is clearly suggested by the Savior in Matt. 22:41-45, “Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, What think ye of the Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in the Spirit call him Lord, saying: The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I put thine enemies under thy feet? If David then calleth him Lord, how is he his son?” Jesus seems to argue here on the assumption that David wrote the 110th Psalm, and that David represents Jehovah as addressing David’s lord the Messiah. Since the Pharisees disputed Jesus’ claim to be divine and held that the Messiah was to be strictly human, Jesus points them to the fact that David calls the Messiah “my Lord,” although the Messiah was to be David’s son; and as, according to Jewish ideas, a human son cannot be counted greater than his father, as the word “lord” implies, the Messiah must be more than human. The Pharisees were wholly unable to answer this argument, for it was clear to them that a father could not reasonably call his son “lord” if that son were simply human. Now if we were certain that David wrote this Psalm, the interpretation would be assured; but many modern scholars insist that while the Psalm may have been written in David’s day, he himself was not its author*. Most of them assume that some prophet

*On the Davidic authorship of this Psalm, see the present writer’s article in the *New Christian Quarterly*, Jan. 1894 (Christian Pub. Co.,

prepared the Psalm and applied the expression "my lord" to David, and that the word "my" refers to the prophet himself. In this view "my lord" can be Messianic only by understanding that David as the head of the Messianic line of descent represents the Messiah in the prophet's mind. The argument of Jesus would not then be strictly sound, but would be sufficient to silence the Pharisees. It would be an *ad hominem* argument, being based on the Jews' false ideas of the authorship of this Psalm.

**The
Royalty.** The writer represents Jehovah as addressing his "lord," and seating him in the highest place of honor known to the writer, at the right hand of Jehovah. His enemies are to be subjected till they shall lie at his feet. Zion shall be the seat of his royal power, and he shall have a broad dominion. His soldiers shall not be mustered under compulsion, but shall volunteer their services, and form a holy array. In the beauty of their martial uniform they shall be as the dewdrops fresh from the womb of the morning. While all these conditions of royalty might be true of David, understanding that David's throne was honored as if it were at Jehovah's right hand, yet they are true in a higher sense of the Messiah, since his exaltation is really at the right hand of God, and his army composed really of holy volunteers clad in the beautiful garments of righteousness.

**The
Priesthood.** The statement "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek," was certainly inappropriate if addressed to David; for, although David at one time wore an ephod (2 Sam. 6:14), and he also took a deep interest in the sacerdotal office, yet he himself was not a priest, did not assume priestly functions, nor did he even stand in a priestly relation toward Israel. The words cannot be properly applied to any of the regular priests in David's time, since they belong to the order of Aaron and not to the order of Melchizedek. In fact, the letter to the Hebrews (7:1-17) explains to us that the order of Melchizedek does not mean a line of priestly

St. Louis, Mo.), which reviews at length the argument of S. R. Driver in his *Intro. to the O. T. Literature*.

descent, but a priest disconnected from a priestly father or mother and from priestly descendants. In whatever sense David's royalty can be regarded as sacerdotal, the royalty of his successors may be so regarded. This fact disqualifies David and succeeding kings from being priests after the manner of Melchizedek. The priestly work of Christ in offering up the world's supreme sacrifice, the value and efficacy of which are final and eternal, presents to us the only proper fulfilment of this prophecy. If it could be shown even that David ever performed a priestly rite, his priesthood could not be regarded as eternal; and there is no known reason that is satisfactory for such a promise to David, seeing that any prophet would be deterred by every natural consideration from thinking of an everlasting priesthood for one who had no right to the priestly office (cf. II. Chr. 26:20), and who could not be reasonably supposed to live forever. It comports only with the divine purpose to save the world by the sacrifice of Christ to understand this prophecy to be directly Messianic and to be the first hint in prophecy that ultimately the royal and priestly offices were to be united in one person.

**His
Victories.**

The remainder of the Psalm describes the victories of the warrior priest-king among the nations of the earth. He will overcome his enemies in many lands, and will refresh himself as one drinking from a brook by the wayside when his conquests are ended. If the passage is Messianic, all this presents a beautiful martial picture of the victorious progress of Christian truth in all parts of the earth, and the fall of heathen powers before the growing dominion of the Messiah.

**Why Regarded
Messianic.**

It can hardly be doubted that this Psalm is Messianic. (a) The style points to an extraordinary fulfilment; for it has a brevity and dignity that could hardly characterise a prophet's panegyric addressed to his sovereign. (b) No other person than the Messiah has filled the position as priest here promised; for neither Jonathan (1 Mac. 10:21), nor Alexander Jannaeus, nor Simon (1 Mac. 14:4), who have been mentioned by some scholars, can be regarded as after the order of Melchizedek, belonging to the Aaronic order, although they may have combined

the office of priest with positions of civil authority. (c) Jehovah's oath concerning the priesthood in which He would not repent, forbids an interpreter to expect a common fulfilment; but, on the contrary, it points to some very notable and important event in the divine purpose, just such as the Messianic priesthood presents. It should be noted that the oaths of Jehovah are very rare, and relate to matters most vital to the interests of the race. (d) The bold style, warlike figures, the title of the Psalm, a comparison of its thought and expression with acknowledged Davidic Psalms, and the New Testament reference, all suggest that David is the author of this Psalm, and hence that "my lord" refers to the Messiah. (e) No other person than Jesus satisfactorily fulfils this prophecy, and in no other do such profound expressions of the divine purpose center, just as we should expect them to be concentrated on the Messiah. On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that the form of this prophecy is more direct than others; and it is wholly lacking in the typical elements which are usual in leading Messianic passages.

4. *The Son of Jehovah Enthroned. Psalm ii.*

"Why do the nations rage,
And the peoples meditate a vain thing?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against Jehovah, and against his anointed, saying,
Let us break their bonds asunder,
And cast away their cords from us.

He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh;
The Lord will have them in derision.
Then will he speak unto them in his wrath,
And vex them in his sore displeasure:
Yet have I set my king
Upon my holy hill of Zion.

I will tell of the decree:
Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my son;
This day have I begotten thee.
Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance,
And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.
Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;
Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Now therefore be wise, O ye kings:
Be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

Serve Jehovah with fear,
 And rejoice with trembling. . .
 Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way,
 For his wrath will soon be kindled:
 Blessed are all they that take refuge in him."

**Arrangement in
Strophes.**

This Psalm is artistically arranged in stanzas or strophes. (1) The first strophe represents the nations of the earth in a vain excitement, taking counsel among themselves with the intent to break off Jehovah's bonds of authority by which they were held, and so despise the dominion of Jehovah's newly anointed king. (2) The second strophe describes a scene in heaven, in which Jehovah laughs at the folly of rebellious nations, decides to vex them in His displeasure, and determines to establish His king in Zion. (3) The third strophe represents the future king publishing the secret decree of Jehovah concerning himself, that he is Jehovah's son, that the rebellious nations are to be his inheritance, and that he shall completely break down their opposition. (4) The fourth strophe is the poet's advice to these preverse kings to serve Jehovah reverently and to greet the Son in recognition of his authority. Thus dramatically the purpose of Jehovah to establish the Davidic king as His own son and to give him universal dominion is presented in this prophetic Psalm.

**Naturalistic
View of the
"Anointed."**

The most important question concerning this scripture is, Who is the "anointed?" Scholars have offered a variety of answers. (1) The naturalistic view is, that David is this personage, and that the anointing was done by Samuel (1 Sam. 16:13), and by the men of Judah (2 Sam. 2:4), and that the victories over the nations refer to the successes of David in battle against the Philistines (2 Sam. v), the Syrians and Ammonites (2 Sam. viii or x). David had just lately been made king of Israel, and had removed to Jerusalem not long before these successes. The nations, however, before these victories, were not yet under "bonds" and "cords" to Jehovah, as they were from David's time on; but while they may have later rebelled and broken away, the claim of David's sovereignty over them may have remained. At least, when once they had become subject to Jehovah's rule

through the Davidic family, they should have continued to honor the divinely appointed government. On this account, the prophecy seems to relate to some ruler later than David. Some have suggested Absalom's rebellion against his father David as a fulfilment of the plot here described; but this does not fairly represent the "kings of the earth" mentioned in the Psalm. Neither can Solomon be the "anointed," for he enjoyed a reign of peace. No king in Judah later than Solomon rises to such a dignity as appropriately to fulfil a prophecy of so majestic a character.

(2) The typical view of this Psalm holds **Typical View.** that any king of Judah may be regarded as the "anointed," and that such a king is a type of Christ, who is the ultimate fulfilment. Against this may be urged the improbability that any king of Judah attained to so dignified a position as to fulfil these predictions in any creditable way. It was not true of any king of Judah that he received the nations of the earth for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of it as his possession. In this respect the Messiah had no adequate type.

(3) The poetical view maintains that no particular event fulfils the prophecy, but that in **Poetical View.** general the opposition of the nations of the earth to the kings which Jehovah established in Zion is meant. This might include the antagonism of all heathen peoples to the Messianic kingdom. Against this stands the impropriety of ascribing divine sonship so generally, even in poetry; and the words, "this day have I begotten thee," are left without any natural significance.

(4) The directly Messianic view of this **Directly Messianic View.** Psalm applies the "anointed" immediately to Christ, and to Him alone. This view is supported by the following considerations: (a) This will best suit the very exalted and peculiar language used in the Psalm, and especially that relating to the solemn decree of God. (b) This view also suits the following facts: that when Christ was crowned he rightly claimed dominion over all the world, which corresponds to the "bonds" and "cords;" that Zion was the earthly seat of the Messiah's kingdom; that Jesus was the real

son of Jehovah as no other person was; that he was also begotten from the grave (Acts 13:33; cf. Rom. 1:4; Col. 1:18); that he only is a priest forever and independent of a priestly family in the same manner as Melchizedek; that the nations are called upon to give him reverence; and that those who place their trust in him are blest. (c) The persecution of the apostles soon after the Messiah's coronation and the beginning of the church was a commencement of that opposition and adverse counsel by the enemies of Christ in which all nations have had some part, and which is here foretold in the rage of the heathen and the counsel taken by kings and rulers (cf. Acts 4:25-27). (d) Jewish interpreters understood this Psalm to refer directly to the Messiah, and did not abandon the view until under the pressure of Christian argument they were compelled either to forego this interpretation or accept Jesus as the Messiah; for they did not regard any of their kings as worthy of the honors which this Psalm describes.

Leading Messianic Ideas. The leading Messianic ideas in this prophecy are the following: (1) Jehovah appoints a king to rule over his people. This is Messianic, not because it necessarily refers directly to the Christ, but because the very fact that a king is appointed by Jehovah implies His interest in humanity and a great effort by Him to accomplish man's blessing. Such a step on the part of God cannot have a significance of less importance than some great purpose to secure good to humanity; and it is this implied purpose that is especially Messianic. (2) This king is to be a newly begotten son of Jehovah. Whether this be taken as referring directly to the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus or not, it must signify a very near and vital relation of the appointed king to God; and this relation must be based upon some exalted purpose in Jehovah's mind. This sacred relation implies Jehovah's deep interest in the person of the king, and consequently in all of his dominion, which again points to the Messianic blessing of the race. (3) The appointed king is to have universal dominion, which implies that God's interest is not limited to any one nation or class, but is designed to secure world-wide benefits. (4) The king will completely overcome his enemies. This fact discloses

the purpose of Jehovah to break down all opposition to the appointed king and also to Himself; and this signifies the complete subversion of evil and its baleful influence among men. Such a purpose is highly Messianic and very far-reaching in time and effect. (5) The subjects of the king shall enjoy his blessing. This completes the Messianic purpose already noticed. Jehovah contemplates a king that shall be very dear to His own heart, who shall secure dominion over all mankind, who shall extirpate all evil and evil doers from his realm, and shall effect the happiness and prosperity of all his loyal subjects.

**A Remarkable
Review.**

This is perhaps an ideal picture, but it is a most remarkable and perfect representation of that world-wide intention of God which is more completely developed as respects principles and plans in the New Testament. It is a wonderful accomplishment for any writer, no matter whether he lived in the days of David or some later time, that he should accurately sketch centuries in advance of developments an outline of the purposes which to this day Jehovah is working out among the children of men. Could such a preview have occurred to the mind of any person without supernatural assistance? To this may be added the suggestion that it is even more notable that in all these prophetic sections we should find just such premonitions of the most important events and principles of the divine government among men, and in no case a representation or characteristic that is untrue to that which has been or is being wrought out in the Christian institution.

5. The Messianic Reign. Psalm lxxii. 1-17.

“Give the king thy judgments, O God,
And thy righteousness unto the king’s son.
He will judge thy people with righteousness,
And thy poor with justice.
The mountains shall bring peace to the people,
And the hills, in righteousness.
He will judge the poor of the people,
He will save the children of the needy,
And will break in pieces the oppressor.

The y shall fear thee while the sun endureth,
And so long as the moon, throughout all generations.

He will come down like rain upon the mown grass,
 As showers that water the earth.
 In his days shall the righteous flourish,
 And abundance of peace, till the moon be no more.
 He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,
 And from the River unto the ends of the earth.

They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him;
 And his enemies shall lick the dust.
 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall render tribute:
 The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.
 Yea, all kings shall fall down before him;
 All nations shall serve him.

For he will deliver the needy when he crieth,
 And the poor, that hath no helper.
 He will have pity on the poor and needy,
 And the souls of the needy he will save.
 He will redeem their soul from oppression and violence;
 And precious will their blood be in his sight:
 And they shall live; and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba,
 And men shall pray for him continually;
 They shall bless him all the day long.

There shall be abundance of grain in the earth upon the top of the
 mountains;
 The fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon:
 And they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.
 His name shall endure forever;
 His name shall be continued as long as the sun:
 And men shall be blessed in him;
 All nations shall call him happy."

**The
 Ideal King.**

This Psalm pictures an ideal king of Jehovah's people. He is not "the king," as if some definite person were meant; but in the original Hebrew it is "a king," not in the sense of "any king," but rather that sense which gives the writer unrestricted freedom in his description of an ideal ruler. Such an ideal king will enjoy the assistance of God in judging his people, so that all his decisions may be just and righteous. Like God who cares for all His creatures, such a king will carefully regard the interests of the poor and the oppressed. Men will show him reverence, and his righteousness and dominion will be greatly extended. His country will be filled with abundance of blessing, both moral and material.

**Poetic
Element.**

The poetic element in the description of such a king must not be overlooked in its interpretation. The poet foresees a dominion for his ruler that shall extend from the River Euphrates, the greatest interior river known in the poet's time, to the most distant lands; but this may not be any indication that the Euphrates will be in any sense a central figure in his dominion, but rather it is a part of the poetic picture of universal territory. Likewise such expressions as "while the sun endureth," "till the moon be no more," and "all day long," are poetic terms for unlimited duration. The references to the kings of Tarshish, Sheba and Seba bringing their gifts to the king are also poetic forms to convey the idea of universal influence among the nations of the earth; for the mention of kings of the most distant lands as paying tribute implies that the rulers of other lands will also show homage.

**Messianic
Features.**

The Messianic features in this Psalm are the following: (1) The Psalmist describes a just and righteous king, who cares alike for the poor and the rich, the oppressed and needy as well as those in honor and comfort. (2) This king shall have universal dominion. (3) His reign of peace shall endure forever. (4) He will redeem his people, and their souls shall be precious in his sight. (5) His reign will be marked by a notable prosperity, in the blessings of which all nations of men shall share. It is evident that no earthly king of Israel fulfilled the prophecy which this poetical picture presents. The universal extent of dominion and the unlimited duration of his reign were wholly beyond the reach of any temporal monarch. At the very least, the poet is voicing the world's need of a ruler greater than any human king can be. His character should be more divine, his power more complete, and his period of rule more unrestricted, than is possible for any ruler of this world. No other than the Messiah could possibly realize this dream of royal excellence. It is a poetical conception of what only the Messiah could become; and hence it is richly and assuredly Messianic.

6. *The Marriage of the Messianic King. Psalm xlv.*

“My heart overfloweth with a goodly matter;
I speak the things which I have made touching the king:
My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.
Thou art fairer than the children of men;
Grace is poured into thy lips:
Therefore God hath blessed thee forever.

Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O mighty one,
Thy glory and thy majesty.
And in thy majesty ride on prosperously,
Because of truth and meekness and righteousness:
And thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.
Thine arrows are sharp;
The peoples fall under thee;
They are in the heart of the king's enemies.

Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever:
A scepter of equity is the scepter of thy kingdom.
Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated wickedness:
Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee
With the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia;
Out of ivory palaces stringed instruments have made thee glad.
Kings' daughters are among thy honorable women:
At thy right hand doth stand the queen in gold of Ophir.

Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear;
Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house:
So will the king desire thy beauty;
For he is thy lord; and reverence thou him.
And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift;
The rich among the people shall entreat thy favor.

The king's daughter within the palace is all glorious:
Her clothing is inwrought with gold.
She shall be led unto the king in broidered work:
The virgins her companions that follow her
Shall be brought unto thee.
With gladness and rejoicing shall they be led:
They shall enter into the king's palace.

Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children,
Whom thou shalt make princes in all the earth.
I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations:
Therefore shall the peoples give thee thanks forever and ever.”

**Occasion of
the Psalm.**

The Psalm clearly represents the marriage of a king that enjoys the especial blessing of God, and celebrates the majesty of the royal bridegroom and bride. It is natural to assume that it was composed on the occasion of the marriage of one of the kings of the Davidic dynasty; but it is by no means easy to determine which of these kings it might be. Many scholars have supposed that it was Solomon in marriage with the family of Hiram of Tyre; because "the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift;" but we have no account of such a marriage. We have mention of Solomon's taking Pharaoh's daughter (1 Ki. 3:1); but it is hard to believe that Tyre would send a gift on that occasion. Moreover this king is a warrior whose "arrows are sharp" and under whom "the peoples fall," and this does not suit the peaceful reign of Solomon. Delitzsch and others hold that this king is Joram, and that this Psalm refers to his marriage with Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and grand-daughter of the king of the Sidonians (2 Chr. 21:6; 1 Ki. 16:31); against which may be urged the serious objection that the wickedness of Joram does not comport with the statement of this Psalm, "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated wickedness." If this Psalm was written in the honor of Joram, even at the beginning of his reign when the author may not have known how wicked his government would be, the hymn must have seemed ever afterwards most incongruous, unduly complimentary, and unprophetic. It is indeed very difficult, if not impossible, to identify the occasion on which this Psalm was produced. Probably no efforts of scholarship will be able to solve the problem. Our historical records mention very few of the marriages of the Davidic kings; but it is safe to assert that if all the marriages had been recorded, neither Solomon's nor Joram's would now be selected.

**The King as
Heir of the
Davidic Promise.**

If the Psalm was written to celebrate the marriage of one of the kings of Judah, we must understand either that the author indulged in fulsome flattery, or that he regarded the king as the heir and representative of the Messianic royalty. Only the latter view seems to accord with the dignity and devoutness of

this production. The writer must have been guided by the promise of Jehovah to David (2 Sam. 7:12-16), and remembered that while the king might be chastised for his iniquities, and therefore might not be worthy in his own person of all that God had promised, he was nevertheless in the lineage of extraordinary blessings. Since the Psalmist regarded these future honors as belonging to the Davidic line, he may have felt free to invest any person of that lineage with these glories as a part of his heritage. In this case the Psalm is Messianic, as a reproduction of the earlier Messianic promise, and yet not necessarily designed by the writer to rest solely in the reigning king, or to ascribe to him typically honors which must belong to some descendant.

**The King as
Type of
Christ.**

If, however, the Psalm was written for some king living in the day of the author, and it be understood typically, then congruity would suggest that he should have had a character that corresponds within natural limitations to that ascribed in the Psalm. This would require that he should be fair and graceful, a successful warrior, a righteous ruler and one for whom his people should be forever grateful. Only with this character would he become to the purposes of this Psalm a type of the Messiah. It may be true that merely as a king, as a descendant of David, and as the anointed of Jehovah he typified Christ; but it is to be noted that these are not the emphatic features of this Psalm, and hence not the natural points of its typology.

**Exalted
Character of
the King.**

The language of the Psalm is expressive of a character which an ordinary king could not be expected to possess. The person here addressed is called "fairer than the children of men;" he is one whom "God hath blessed forever;" to him is addressed the very remarkable words, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever;" and, "Thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows;" and to him it is said, "The peoples shall give thee thanks forever and ever." To him also it is said, "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou shalt make princes in all the earth." It is evident that these expressions cannot reasonably apply to any of the Davidic kings.

Three Views.

Remembering the important fact that the writer manifests his knowledge of Jehovah's promise to David, the interpreter of this Psalm appears to have choice of three views of its meaning: either (1) that the king here addressed is one of the Davidic line, and receives these ascriptions of honor because he is in the line of inheritance of the divine promises to David; or (2) that some Davidic king is here addressed as a type of the Messiah, and honors are paid him in view of that typical relation; or (3) that the Psalm is written independently of the king who may have been reigning at the time of composition, and that it is addressed directly to the Messiah, and celebrates the union of Christ with his church.

Third View Discussed.

While the last view does not furnish to our thought a historical occasion for the production of such a hymn, unless it be supposed that the poet took suggestion from some royal marriage without addressing the king present at the time, yet it well accounts for all those expressions which would be extravagant if applied merely to a temporal king. It is certainly true in the most literal sense that only the Messiah in all the lineage of David is "fairer than the children of men," that "his throne is forever and ever," and that he has been anointed "with the oil of gladness above his fellows." While it is true that judges as representatives of God in the administration of God's law were sometimes called gods (Ps. 82:1, 6; Jn. 10:34, 35), nevertheless the title is applied to the judges in a tone of reproach, and not in an air of majestic solemnity. It is also clear that no other rulers so highly and literally deserve this title as he that came forth from the Father. It is not surprising, therefore, that the writer of Hebrews (1: 8, 9) quotes this passage and applies it directly to our risen and exalted Lord. In any view that may be taken, this Psalm appears to have a depth, reach and richness of meaning unmerited by any ruler in Israel until Jehovah sent him, "who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the

Majesty on high; having become by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they."

7. *Deliverance by Jehovah. Psalm xviii. 43-50.*

Occasion.

The occasion of this Psalm, as indicated by the title, was when David had escaped from the hands of Saul when his life had been in great peril. In all his battles he had been victorious; and his confidence in God had always been firm, and had never been disappointed. He now composes a very beautiful ascription of praise, and describes Jehovah's coming in great majesty to discomfit David's enemies and to deliver him from death. The Psalm must have been written in the earlier part of David's reign, if not before he came to the throne; for his great sin had not yet been committed, as is clear from the words, "I was also perfect with him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity." He seems to be anticipating his reign at the time of writing; for he says, "As soon as they hear of me they shall obey me."

The Messianic Passage.

The leading Messianic features of the Psalm may be found in the following lines:

"Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people;
Thou hast made me the head of the nations:
A people whom I have not known shall serve me.
As soon as they hear of me they shall obey me.
The foreigners shall submit themselves unto me.
The foreigners shall fade away,
And shall come trembling out of their close places.

Jehovah liveth; and blessed be my rock;
And exalted be the God of my salvation,
Even the God that executeth vengeance for me,
And subdueth peoples under me.
He rescueth me from mine enemies;
Yea, thou liftest me up above them that rise up against me;
Thou deliverest me from the violent man.

Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O Jehovah, among the nations,
And will sing praises unto thy name.
Great deliverance giveth he to his king,
And showeth lovingkindness to his anointed,
To David and his seed for evermore." Cf. 2 Sam. 22:44-51.

Messianic Elements. The chief Messianic elements in this passage are: (1) God may be relied upon to deliver the righteous out of the power of evil. David regards himself as upright and devout, and hence has confidence that he cannot be ultimately forsaken to his enemies who have not so noble a character. This truth has universal application, and underlies the whole divine effort to rescue man from the power of sin and the hands of Satan. (2) The work which Jehovah is here expected to do for David as king is ideal, more than David himself could realize, and what has been performed only for the Messianic king. (3) The words of the forty-ninth verse of the Psalm are quoted by Paul, Rom. 15:9, "Therefore will I give praise unto thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name," and applied to the influence of Christ in the Gentile world. David exercised some influence over the nations immediately around him, but the record of his life does not justify the belief that his power reached more distant nations. The unlimited extent to which the praises of Jehovah should be proclaimed among the Gentiles according to the Psalm, is well adapted to express the unlimited reach of Christian teaching and worship. (4) The closing words of the Psalm, "to his anointed, to David and to his seed, forevermore," clearly include the Messiah. The presence of this Messianic conclusion confirms in some measure our estimate of the Messianic value of the other contents of the Psalm.

8. *Triumphal Entry of the King. Psalm xxiv. 7-10.*

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors:
And the King of glory will come in.

Who is the King of glory?

Jehovah strong and mighty,
Jehovah mighty in battle.
Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Yea, lift them up, ye everlasting doors:
And the King of glory will come in.

Who is this King of glory?

Jehovah of hosts,
He is the King of glory."

Occasion.

The Psalm seems to be composed of two portions entirely independent of each other, and many scholars have become convinced that originally they were two distinct poems, and that in some unknown way they have been written together. The portion belonging to the present study reads as if it might have been composed for that occasion when David brought the ark of Jehovah into the city of Jerusalem in company with a multitude of priests and people and with much ceremony. The Psalm would be appropriate to be sung by the procession as the people approached the gates of the city. Compare 2 Sam. 6:12-15. The ark and the mercy-seat, which was the lid of the ark, represented the presence of Jehovah in the midst of Israel; and accordingly when the people bade the gates of the city to open, it was not primarily to admit David or his people, but to give admission to Jehovah, the king of glory. Thenceforth Jerusalem was the city of the Great King.

**Triumph of
Jehovah.**

Whether we have rightly conjectured the occasion of writing the Psalm or not, its most emphatic representation is the triumph of Jehovah. This thought may be purposely left in an indefinite form, in order that it may find its realization, not in some single event, but in every event where the success of truth against error or right against wrong is signally manifested. The greatest possible exhibition of such a triumph must be the crowning victory of the Messiah over the forces of sin.

Application.

This scripture is often interpreted as celebrating the entry of the ark into Jerusalem considered as a type of the entrance of the risen Christ into heaven at the time of his ascension.* There is no direct evidence regarding its intended application; and while the content of the Psalm is well suited to the ascension, it is equally well adapted to the

*Compare the distinct affirmation of Briggs (Mes. Proph., p. 146): "The triumphant entrance of Jehovah into Zion is the type of the ascension of the Messiah, Jesus, to the heavenly Zion after His triumphant resurrection." It may be so; but unless we hold that all such similarities are types, whether divinely intended or not, how are we to be assured of this typology? This point is discussed in the author's *Principles of Interpretation*, p. 259 ff.

final triumph of the Messiah at the close of the Christian age. In any case the Psalm vividly presents the triumph of the true God and His people over all the enemies of righteousness. Such a triumph is elsewhere abundantly presented as an object of Christian hope.

9. *The Glory of Man. Psalm viii.*

“O Jehovah, our Lord,
How excellent is thy name in all the earth,
Who hast set thy glory upon the heavens!
Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou established strength,
Because of thine adversaries,
That thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
What is man, that thou art mindful of him?
And the son of man, that thou visitest him?
For thou hast made him but little lower than God,
And crownest him with glory and honor.

Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands;
Thou hast put all things under his feet:
All sheep and oxen,
Yea, and the beasts of the field,
The birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea,
Whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

O Jehovah, our Lord.
How excellent is thy name in all the earth!”

A Night
Psalm.

From the third line of this Psalm it is supposed that it was composed at night when its author was engaged in contemplating the heavens. It is a psalm of meditation, and compares with Psalm vi, which was probably written as a morning hymn, looking back upon a sleepless night. The burden of this Psalm is to express the excellence of Jehovah as demonstrated by his works in the heavens and on the earth.

Praise from
Children.

The passage, “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast established strength,” is quoted in Matt. 21:16 as applicable to the occasion when Jesus had triumphantly entered the city of Jerusalem,

and was purifying the temple, and little children were crying in his praise, "Hosanna to the son of David." The faith and confession of little children make the cause of God strong, because their sincerity cannot be called in question, and because of the fact that if children with their simple comprehension clearly see the rightfulness of praise, the enemies of God must be blind to their duty of showing Him honor. Some scholars interpret that the voice of an infant's cry demonstrates the glory of God who created such a voice; and others urge that the providence of God manifested in the protection of infants who are the most helpless of creatures, shows His praise.

**Rank
of Man.**

As compared with the greatness of God exhibited in the glory of the heavens, man appears very insignificant, so that it would seem wonderful that God should deign to notice him; but God is constantly mindful of man, visits him, and has made him little less than God by forming him in the divine image and endowing him with powers similar to those of the divine intelligence. Moreover, God has given to man dominion over everything on land and sea, and has thus bestowed upon him an office commensurate with his abilities. This passage is clearly a reflection of the announcement to man on the day of his creation (Gen. 1:26-30).

**Messianic
Glory.**

The writer of Hebrews quotes the language of this Psalm respecting the honor which God has bestowed upon man (Heb. 2:5-9), and refers it to man, not in his fallen estate, but in his ideal condition when redeemed through Christ. That author recognizes the fall of man and the full extent of human weakness; but he sees in Jesus the ideal man, fulfilling man's destiny by attaining himself to the high rank to which man is entitled and by bringing up the race with him to its intended glory. The writer of Hebrews holds that all things are not yet subjected to man, and consequently man has not in his fallen condition reached the dignity and power which the Psalmist contemplates. In this fact he perceives the necessity of the Messiah to go before the race, to attain its ideal excellence himself in advance, and then to lift up humanity to his own plane of exaltation. Thus

in Christ sinful man becomes a new creation, a new and exalted humanity.

10. *Deliverance from Death. Psalm xvi.*

"Preserve me, O God; for in thee do I take refuge.
O my soul, thou hast said unto Jehovah, Thou art my Lord:
I have no good beyond thee.
As for the saints that are in the earth,
They are the excellent in whom is all my delight.

Their sorrows shall be multiplied that give gifts for another god:
Their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer,
Nor take their names upon my lips.
Jehovah is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup:
Thou maintainest my lot.

The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places;
Yea, I have a goodly heritage.
I will bless Jehovah, who hath given me counsel;
Yea, my heart instructeth me in the night seasons.
I have set Jehovah always before me:
Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoiceth:
My flesh also shall dwell in safety.
For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol;
Neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption.
Thou wilt show me the path of life:
In thy presence is fulness of joy;
In thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

**Date and
Authorship.**

The title of this Psalm ascribes it to David; and this seems to be confirmed by the very ancient style of the Hebrew text and the character of the thought. New Testament quotations also recognize the Davidic authorship (Acts 2:25; 13:35). If he was the author, the Psalm was probably written at a time when he was under Saul's persecution, which is implied by the expression "take refuge" and "my flesh also shall dwell in safety."

**Personal
Allusions.**

In this case the "saints" and "excellent" are probably the portion of Israel that did not approve Saul's course, and especially the elders of Judah whom David counted among his friends and to whom he sent portions of his spoil taken in battle (1 Sam. 30:26). Those "that give gifts for another god" may refer to such persons as

drove David forth from the inheritance of Jehovah, telling him to "go and serve other gods" (1 Sam. 26:19); but possibly it may refer to some persons in Israel who regularly made offerings to the gods of other nations.

Interpretations. The most important part of the Psalm for the present study is the statement, "For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol; neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption." This might mean either (1) that God will keep David from dying, especially at the hands of his enemies, and in this way not leave his soul in the unseen world; or (2) that David's death will virtually be no death at all, because of his expected resurrection from the dead; or (3) that the words are used directly with reference to the Messiah, who died, but did not remain long enough in the tomb to see corruption.

A Dilemma. The whole Psalm appears to present the reflections of David suited to his own personal experiences, which favors the first view. The passage is quoted, however, in the New Testament (Acts 2:20-31; 13:35, 36), and applied directly to the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, which would favor the third view. The apostle Peter argues that David could not refer to himself, for he died and saw corruption; but that he was a prophet, and foresaw that Jesus should be raised up without corruption. This would seem to force us to a choice between a contextual interpretation of the Psalm and Peter's interpretation.

A Proposed Solution. Some scholars have sought to avoid this alternative by supposing that David indeed spoke only of his personal deliverance in this life; but that Peter either erroneously assumes a different meaning, or merely applies the language otherwise as a fitting quotation without intending to affirm what may be its original import. It seems to the devout interpreter very remarkable that Peter on Pentecost under the immediate influence and direction of the Holy Spirit should through error misapply this scripture; yet it is very certain that the argument of the apostle requires us to understand that he was giving his view of the original meaning. He plainly affirms that David was a prophet, and that he foresaw, and in this passage spoke of the resurrection of the Christ.

It seems not easy to mistake the apostle's meaning.

**Another
Solution.**

Other interpreters have suggested that in thought David rose above death, caught a glimpse of immortality, and ideally described a state which was not realized by him, at least in this life, but reached ultimately only in Christ.* According to this view David disregarded the corruption of the body as if it did not take place, and fixed his hope on an immortality which he should attain through Christ. It would be difficult to reconcile this interpretation with Peter's sermon on Pentecost; for the apostle bases his argument on the corruption of the body of David and the incorruption of the body of Jesus in the tomb.

**A Third
Solution.**

Other scholars hold that the experiences of David under the protection of God made him suitable to utter prophecy only partially applicable to himself, and partly fulfilled in Christ alone. This view accepts in full the reasoning of the apostle and the direct Messianic value of the passage, and yet does not neglect the historical situation of the prophet which made him the more ready vehicle of the message. This also recognizes the combined human and divine authorship, by which David writes as if speaking out of his own experience and confidence, and yet is overruled by the Holy Spirit to speak also of things beyond his own sphere. It is only this sort of double authorship that justifies a double direct application. This view does not overlook the typical character of David, according to which Jehovah was keeping watch and protection over him just as over the Messiah; and the withholding of David from death, as he probably interpreted his own experience, involved the same principle of divine help as the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Indeed,

*A slightly different phase of this view is thus given by A. Maclaren, Commentary on Psalm xvi, Expos. Bible: "The Psalm sets forth the ideal relation of the perfectly devout man to death and the future, and that ideal is a reality in Him, from whom the blessed continuity, which the psalmist was sure must belong to fellowship so close as was his with God, flows to all who unite themselves with him. He has trodden the path of life which he shows to us, and it is life, at every step even when it dips into the darkness of what men call death, whence it rises into the light of the Face which it is a joy to see, and close to the loving strong Hand which holds and gives pleasures for evermore."

often in prophetic thought the Messiah, as the son of David, is David merely projected into the future so that the divine utterances of David concerning himself are quite within the field of his own great regal Successor.

11. *The Suffering One. Psalm xxii.*

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?
Why so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?
O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou answerest not;
And in the night season, and am not silent.

But thou art holy,
O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.
Our fathers trusted in thee:
They trusted, and thou didst deliver them.
They cried unto thee, and were delivered:
They trusted in thee, and were not put to shame.

But I am a worm, and no man;
A reproach of men, and despised of the people.
All they that see me laugh me to scorn:
They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,
Commit thyself unto Jehovah; let him deliver him:
Let him rescue him, seeing he delighteth in him.

But thou art he that took me out of the womb;
Thou didst make me trust when I was upon my mother's breasts.
I was cast upon thee from the womb;
Thou art my God since my mother bare me.
Be not far from me; for trouble is near;
For there is none to help.

Many bulls have compassed me;
Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.
They gape upon me with their mouth,
As a ravening and roaring lion.
I am poured out like water,
And all my bones are out of joint:
My heart is like wax;
It is melted within me.
My strength is dried up like a potsherd;
And my tongue cleaveth to my jaws;
And thou hast brought me into the dust of death.
For dogs have compassed me:
A company of evil doers have enclosed me;
They pierced my hands and my feet.
I may count all my bones;
They look and stare upon me.
They part my garments among them,
And upon my vesture do they cast lots.

But be not thou far off, O Jehovah:
 O thou my succor, haste thee to help me.
 Deliver my soul from the sword,
 My darling from the power of the dog.
 Save me from the lion's mouth;
 Yea, from the horns of the wild-oxen thou hast answered me.

I will declare thy name unto my brethren:
 In the midst of the assembly will I praise thee.
 Ye that fear Jehovah, praise him;
 All ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him;
 And stand in awe of him, all ye the seed of Israel.
 For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;
 Neither hath he hid his face from him;
 But when he cried unto him, he heard.
 Of thee cometh my praise in the great assembly:
 I will pay my vows before them that fear him.
 The meek shall eat and be satisfied;
 They shall praise Jehovah that seek after him:
 Let your heart live forever.

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto Jehovah;
 And all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.
 For the kingdom is Jehovah's;
 And he is the ruler over the nations.
 All the fat ones of the earth shall eat and worship;
 All they that go down to the dust shall bow before him,
 Even he that cannot keep his soul alive.
 A seed shall serve him;
 It shall be told of the Lord unto the next generation.
 They shall come and shall declare his righteousness
 Unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done it."

Late Dates If the historical situation of the writer of this
Proposed for Psalm were well known, the task of interpreta-
the Psalm. tion would be simplified; but we are not able
 positively to determine the date of its composition. Ewald and
 Hitzig suggest that perhaps it was written in Jeremiah's time,
 because the Psalm expresses a condition of dire distress in which
 the writer is closely beset by his enemies, which seems to suit the
 conditions of Jeremiah better than others before him. Briggs
 and Baur refer the Psalm to the time of the Babylonian Exile;
 but Olshausen proposes the time of the Maccabees.

Reasons for On the other hand, Delitzsch and many others
Davidic ascribe the Psalm to David chiefly for the follow-
Authorship. reasons: (1) The title of the Psalm affirms its
 Davidic authorship, and the location of the

Psalm near to others that are most surely David's seems to confirm that view. (2) No other person than the king, and most appropriately king David, could associate with his own sufferings and deliverance the conversion of the heathen and the blessing of mankind by means of an announcement of his deliverance. Apparently no other person would have grounds for believing that his own experiences would redound to the help and benefit of distant people. (3) The language of the Psalm possesses the vividness and vigor of David's writings. (4) The close perils of David in the time of persecution which he suffered at the hands of Saul seem to furnish an occasion well suited to the utterances of anguish and desperation found in this Psalm; yet we cannot be certain that historical circumstances precisely correspond to these representations in the time of any writer.* Indeed, if the Psalm were interpreted strictly with reference to the Messiah, not all of it is applicable to any one moment of his experience; but the first half of the Psalm would apply to his crucifixion while the second half must apply to his resurrection. There is at least strong reason for holding the Davidic authorship, while the reasons against it are based mainly on uncertain suppositions respecting David's historical conditions.

**Is the Psalm
Messianic?**

While we may not decide with assurance whether the writer intended to portray his own situation and grief, we are certain that there is a wonderful fitness in the utterances of the Psalm to the experience and work of the Messiah. (1) The person here described is righteous, and yet is abandoned of God. Taking this in connection with the fact that this person still recognizes that Jehovah

*"The sufferings and hopes of the psalmist lead many recent scholars to hold to the exilic or post-exilic date. Cheyne sees in the Psalm "the personified Genius of Israel, or more precisely the followers of Nehemiah, including the large-hearted Psalmist" (Origin of Psalter, p. 264). Against this view stand out distinctly the following facts: (1) The psalm throughout is too individualistic to be merely a "personified Genius." (2) In the progress of thought it must far antedate Isaiah liii; for the relations of the writer to the "ends of the earth" are not vicarious nor redemptive, but exemplary (vv. 22, 27). (3) One of the reasons that men shall turn to the true God is, that "the kingdom is Jehovah's, and He is ruler among the nations," a form of thought that belongs not to the post-exilic time, but to that of the Second Psalm.

is his God, it follows that there must be some extraordinary reason why divine help is withdrawn. This at once suggests that the abandonment is temporary and designed to accomplish some most important purpose; and in this purpose, if anywhere in the Psalm, is the kernel of Messianic blessing. (2) The enemies of the person here mentioned, like beasts, mock at his sufferings. This indeed might be true in the case of David and many others; but it is notably fitting to the scenes of the Savior's trial and crucifixion, and would seem to be typical if not prophetic of these events. (3) His hands and feet are pierced, his body racked and tortured, while his tongue is parched with thirst. Here again is a series of apt descriptions of the agonies on Calvary. No one will contend that these things might not be true of others, but it is remarkable that they should combine with all the other points of the Psalm to complete the picture of the Messiah's passion and deliverance. (4) His garments are parted among his enemies. This would seem perhaps a trifling matter for a prophecy a thousand years before its fulfilment in Jesus and the Roman soldiers; but a prophetic touch like this is far more important than a few articles of clothing, since it represents the completeness of the temporary victory which the enemies of this victim had gained over him, and will serve the better to show how signal is to be his deliverance by Jehovah. All this is important.* (5) It is out of "the dust of death" that he is rescued. This might be an extreme statement of the utter despair which some person reached before his deliverance, but it is literally true of Jesus that he went down into the grave before he triumphed by divine help. This is an essential feature in the experience of Christ as a part of his redemptive work. (6) What God did for him is publicly declared to all the ends

*The Messianic element in this Psalm in consonance with its apparent description of its author's experience is thus recognized by A. Maclaren: "Certainty as to the authorship of this psalm is probably unattainable. How far its words fitted the condition of the singer must therefore remain unsettled. But that these minute and numerous correspondences are more than coincidences, it seems perverse to deny. The present writer, for one, sees shining through the shadowy personality of the psalmist the figure of the Prince of Sufferers, and believes that whether the former's plaints applied in all their particulars to him, or whether there is in them a certain 'element of hyperbole' which

of the earth, which well suits the world-wide proclamation of the gospel embodying the death and resurrection of Jesus. (7) His great sufferings and final rescue by the help of Jehovah will result in the conversion of men in all nations. This well describes the effect of the gospel of Christ as it is proclaimed throughout the world.

**Poetic and
Vital Elements.**

The items just considered are the leading thoughts of this Psalm; but like all other prophecies in poetic form, this passage contains much material of a concrete descriptive character which is designed only to complete the poetical picture. In this Psalm the poet naturally represents his enemies as roaring lions, or dogs, or wild-oxen, ready to rush upon him and overcome him; but such passages must not be interpreted literally with respect to the writer himself or to the person concerning whom the prophecy is spoken. Indeed, the vital element of the poem is the interest of Jehovah in man, on account of which assurance is given that through some great sacrifice all the peoples of the earth shall secure an inestimable benefit.

SUMMARY.

**Summary
Limited.**

It is not necessary in a brief summary to recount all the items of Messianic import which we have found in the Davidic period, but rather to note those which are most significant and those which mark an advance beyond the prophecies of earlier times. It may be profitable to recall at least the following:

**Priestly
Functions.**

1. The priestly functions which formerly were committed to the whole nation (Ex. 19:6), are here limited to a sure and faithful family (1 Sam. 2:35, 36). This is not to be understood as diminishing the priestly character of all Israel itself, but these functions are placed responsibly upon a single household.

becomes simple fact in Jesus' sufferings, the psalm is a prophecy of Him and them. In the former case the psalmist's experience, in the latter case his utterances, were divinely shaped so as to prefigure the sacred sorrows of the Man of Sorrows."

David's Throne. 2. God will unconditionally establish David's heir on the throne of his kingdom forever. 2 Sam. 7:11-16. This promise is more definite than that given to Judah (Gen. 49:10), since it limits the sceptre to one family in Judah, and announces that the royalty thus bestowed shall continue forever.

Royal Priest. 3. The prophet's "lord" is to be exalted to the right hand of God, made victorious over the world, and appointed a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Psalm cx. Every feature of this prediction is new and important. The exaltation of the king chosen of God, his broad victory, and his combination of royalty and priesthood which shall not end, mark him as a rare and wonderful personage, wholly different from any one who had arisen in Israel, and with an office different from any that had as yet been contemplated.

Royal Son. 4. The king appointed by Jehovah is also His Son newly begotten, whose dominion shall extend to the uttermost parts of the earth, and who demands the reverence of all the peoples. Psalm ii. This prophecy exceeds any utterance that has gone before it in the fact that sonship to Jehovah in the special and personal sense here indicated is the highest rank yet announced for any person. In Psalm cx the "lord" was to sit at the right hand of Jehovah's power, which might be called a divine premiership; but sonship is greater than premiership, since the son is an heir of all things while the premier is only appointed to a particular task. Also, the extent of dominion here promised is greater than that heretofore presented; for while in Psalm cx enemies were to be overcome "in many countries," here a possession of "the uttermost parts of the earth" is predicted.

King's Rule. 5. The king's rule is to be universal, as already noted in previous Psalms; but now more than this, it is to be peaceful, perpetual and prosperous. Psalm lxxii.

Divine King. 6. The king is to be himself divine, and is to rule with a sceptre of equity and with the love of righteousness; and therefore he is to be anointed above his fellowmen. Psalm xlv. Here the king's rank is nothing short of

majestic divinity. His personal character and the morale of his reign are to correspond to his own supreme dignity. This is decidedly an advance upon previous announcements.

**Triumphal
Entry.**

7. Jehovah in triumph enters the Holy City. Psalm xxiv. Such a picture of triumphal ovation has not been hitherto set forth.

**Glory of
Man.**

8. Man, although sinful and insignificant, is to be esteemed little less than God, and to be crowned with honor and authority. Psalm viii. A basis for this utterance was laid in the declaration of Gen. 1:26; but since the despair of man in the toils of sin and his deep humiliation in weakness and misery, no announcement has been made that has promised so perfect a return to his original grandeur as this. It gives to a wretched race a new outlook of hope, and that of the highest character.

**The One
Not Forsaken
to Sheol.**

9. The Holy One of Jehovah shall not be forsaken to the realms of death nor be permitted to see corruption, but by the power of God shall be rescued from that enemy to whom all others fall a prey. Psalm xvi. If this is to be understood as a preview of the resurrection of Christ, it is the first prophecy to that effect, and is hence an important advance in prophetic development.

**The Great
Deliverance.**

10. The one whom God forsook in the very depths of distress and despair, He afterward delivered; and by a declaration of these divine events men of all lands were brought to the service and praise of Jehovah. Psalm xxii. In this Prophecy much is new. Jehovah for a time forsakes the object of His love in direst extremities, then again rescues him from his enemies, causes a gospel concerning these doings to be proclaimed to all nations, and by this means secures the service of every class of mankind.

**Great
Advance.**

Altogether, this period of prophecy marks a great advance in the development of the divine plan. It is probably a more rapid advance than any that may be found in the same length of time either earlier or later. It is this fact that has led many scholars to assign some of these psalms to later dates, and it would seem really a

strong persuasion; but there are some reasons why at this time the progress of revelation should be greater than usual. (1) It was a time of national improvement. A better morality than that which had prevailed during the period of the wilderness and the judges was at this time obtaining among the people. A more perfect loyalty to Jehovah under the combined influence of Samuel and David are now existing in Israel. Also a closer unity and fellowship of tribes in civil and religious matters were brought about. (2) It was a time of high expectation due to the defeat of former oppressors and the securing of a complete relief from external annoyance. It was a time suited to inspire faith in Jehovah and confidence in national permanence and power. (3) Above all things else, it was the time of establishing the monarchy, which was one of the most important steps toward the Messianic kingdom; and it was the time of choosing the regal and Messianic family. This made it the appropriate season to announce many of those features of the Messianic reign toward which this change of Israel's government directly pointed. (4) It was a time to deposit in the hearts of all Israel those hopes which should sustain the kingdom, or at least the faith of the people, in all the crises of future years. This suggests the necessity of all those prophecies which relate to the perpetuity of David's family as heirs of the throne: those concerning the exaltation, dignity and office of the ideal king; and those that pertain to the universality, exclusiveness, peacefulness and prosperity of the ideal kingdom, including those respecting the priesthood.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PROPHECIES OF AMOS AND HOSEA.

The Prophets. Along with these two earlier prophets of the eighth century before Christ, Amos and Hosea, who prophesied for the Northern Kingdom at a time of a very sad decline in the moral and spiritual temper of the people, many scholars have included also Joel who ministered to Judah at a time when the inhabitants of that land likewise needed reproof and repentance; but while there is much that may be offered in support of the view that Joel taught in this period, there are so many and cogent reasons for holding to a much later date that it seems better to place his prophecies in a list of undated productions most of which could not have been very early.* These prophets seem to have labored independently of each other and of any others that may have lived in their time.

1. *The Ruined House of David Rebuilt.* *Amos ix. 8-15.*

Time of Amos. Amos, the writer of this prophecy, was at one time a humble herdsman of the village of Tekoa, which was situated about twelve miles southeast of Jerusalem in the country of Judah. He prophesied "in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake" (Amos 1:1). We do not know the time of the earthquake to which allusion is here made; but the most recent facts bearing upon the dates of these kings indicate that Uzziah reigned 791-740 B. C., and Jero-

*The writer is preparing, as a companion to this book, a volume of critical notes on Messianic passages, in which he purposes to set forth at some length both sides of this and other critical questions, so as to afford the student an opportunity of making an unbiased decision. That work may here be anticipated only so far as to say that the date of Joel cannot be positively assigned; but if it be not as early as Amos, it is probably later than Ezra.

boam 790-749 B. C.,* which would locate the work of Amos between 790 and 749, probably late in Jeroboam's reign, perhaps 760-750.

Burden of the Book.

The chief burden of the book of Amos is judgment for sin. He points out the judgments of Jehovah against surrounding nations, and then last of all announces the punishment of Northern Israel, which, on account of the greatness of violence and iniquity in the land, is most imminent. Through many chapters the charges of wickedness are hurled into the face of the nation, strong threatenings are pronounced, and urgent exhortation is given to repent, to "hate the evil, and love the good, and establish justice in the gate: it may be that Jehovah, the God of hosts, will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph." In the eighth and ninth chapters the prophet seems to see the doom of Israel as if it were at hand. He says,

"Behold, the eyes of the Lord Jehovah are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; save that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith Jehovah. For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all the nations, like as grain is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least kernel fall upon the earth." Amos ix. 8, 9.

This clearly foretells the Exile, but promises that not all of the house of Israel shall be destroyed: and this is in harmony with the purpose of God often announced before, to make use of the people of Israel in the salvation of the world.

Blessing Through House of David.

It is not Northern Israel, however, that will bring about the Messianic blessing; and this is indicated in the following passage, with which the book of Amos closes:

"In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the nations that are called by my name, saith Jehovah, that doeth this. Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring back the captivity of my

*For a brief view of different chronologies of the kings of this period, prepared by recent scholars, see *Isaiah's Life and Times*, by Driver, p. 13.

people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith Jehovah thy God." Amos ix. 11-15.

**Messianic
Elements.**

This scripture promises a restoration of the people of Israel after they shall have been taken captive, that they may rebuild the cities that have been overthrown and re-establish their homes in the land of their fathers. The following seem to be the leading Messianic elements:

**Preservation
of Israel.**

(1) The house of Jacob shall not be utterly destroyed. This was not promised to any other nation; and the reason is a Messianic one, because through no other nation was God's greatest work for mankind to be accomplished. It is not improper to denominate such a feature Messianic; for the utterances of the Hebrew prophets, unlike those of heathen seers and sibyls, are not complete in any single passage, but are in parts (Heb. 1:1), all of which taken together form a complete system of prophetic revelation. The preservation of the Hebrew nation taken alone and without regard to correlative announcements might not be deemed Messianic; but since that along with many other divine events was necessary to the final Messianic accomplishment, and since it is a part of the whole system of Messianic prophecy, it is also to be regarded properly as Messianic.

**Sifting and
Saving.**

(2) Every grain of good in Israel, when the nation shall be thoroughly sifted on account of its sins, will be saved (ver. 9). This fact interpreted in the light of related predictions signifies that Jehovah reserves that part of Israel which he may be able to use in his service for the accomplishment of some purpose to be manifested in later times; and such a purpose, if worthy of God, must be Messianic. Other utterances of the prophets, not to say anything of the fact now apparent in history, confirm this conclusion.

**Tabernacle
of David.**

(3) The tabernacle of David that fell into ruins will be rebuilt. The Davidic family occupied the throne of Judah over four hundred

years; but the Babylonian Exile deprived the heir of David of his sceptre, and many generations passed during which time the house of David, here called his "tabernacle," was in ruins. Amos foresees this condition of David's house,* and predicts that the royal power shall be restored to David's posterity, and in this sense the tabernacle of David shall be rebuilt. Clearly this was accomplished when the son of Mary was seated in royal majesty at the right hand of God with the sceptre of Israel and of the world in his hand. It has certainly been fulfilled in no other person.

Prosperity.

(4) Abundant fruitfulness is promised to Israel when they shall be restored. As in many other passages, this prediction is expressive of the divine blessing which in varied forms will and does attend a righteous and faithful generation. If the Messianic age develops peace, uprightness and loyalty to the highest principles of life, such as Jehovah enjoins upon men, it must inevitably be a period of prosperity.

Israel Replanted.

(5) Israel is to be replanted, never to be plucked up again. If this refers to the restoration of the Jews to Palestine after the Babylonian captivity, and predicts that they would never again be removed from that land, the opposite certainly has been fulfilled. This might be the meaning, and the prophecy be understood as based on the condition of Israel's dutifulness to Jehovah, which condition was not fulfilled, and consequently Israel did not secure their promised reward. In the midst of other Messianic announcements, however, this might be regarded as a forecast of the stability of the kingdom of God in the Messianic age. The Church of Christ on earth will never be uprooted by the hands

*Farrar on this passage (Minor Prophets, p. 68), says, "The tabernacle of David had been rent with breaches and encumbered with ruins by Jeroboam I., and by Josiah, and by foreign foes," which implies that David's tabernacle had already fallen when Amos spoke. Although "is fallen" (English version) may seem to imply this, yet, the foregoing prophecy of exile, which was future to the prophet and which was to overturn Northern Israel, a part of David's dominion, implies that he uses the words "is fallen" for the time just preceding the restoration, not for the time when the prediction is uttered. While Amos does here prophesy the fall of Judah directly, yet that fall must precede the return of Northern Israel; and Amos did anticipate it, saying that a fire should "devour the palaces of Jerusalem" (2:5).

of its enemies. In either view, the purpose of Jehovah to give permanence to His people and honor to His name is assured.

**Light out of
Darkness.**

Thus out of the midst of the moral darkness and prospective disaster that surrounded the prophet Amos, he reveals a bright and glorious future for His people as a reward for their faithful obedience to the God of Jacob whom at that time Israel had almost forsaken.

2. *Compassion to Rejected Israel. Hos. i. 2—ii. 1.*

**Hosea and
His Time.**

Concerning the prophet Hosea little is known. The place of his home is not mentioned in the Old Testament, and it is not certain whether he lived in Judah or Northern Israel. His prophecies, however, relate mainly to the Northern Kingdom. The first verse announces that Hosea was the son of Beerî; but the father is otherwise unknown. The same verse informs us that Hosea prophesied in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, Kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel. We do not know how long in the reigns of Uzziah and Hezekiah Hosea prophesied; but our later chronologists usually place the death of Uzziah in 740 B. C., and the beginning of Hezekiah's reign in 709 B. C. In any case it would seem that Hosea's ministry lasted over thirty years, and we may reasonably suppose that the present book is but a small fragment of the prophetic message of his life. Many scholars think the first prophecy was uttered before the death of Jeroboam, about 750 B. C., and that his other prophecies were delivered at intervals down to the days of Hezekiah. It was a time of moral and political gloom, the period in which Northern Israel was rapidly approaching its down-fall in 722 B. C. It is probable that the greater part of Hosea's work consisted in an attempt to stem this irresistible tide of immorality and destruction; and while he could not prevent the devastation of his country and the exile of his people, he doubtless saved many from a moral and spiritual ruin worse than the fate of the land. Besides this, he erected prophetic monuments, valuable not only in his own degenerate times, but priceless as a heritage to other generations.

His family.

The present prophecy opens with a command from Jehovah to Hosea to be married to a woman of lawless life, because the land was unfaithful to Jehovah. So he took Gomer, who bore a son whom Jehovah named Jezreel, because that in a little while the blood of Jezreel, the city of Ahab and Jezebel, should be avenged upon the house of Jehu, who had slain the descendants of Ahab, but whose own descendants now on the throne were equally displeasing to Jehovah. In this connection the overthrow of the Kingdom of Israel is foretold. The first daughter was called Lo-ruhamah, which means No-mercy, for Jehovah would show no mercy to the house of Israel, although Judah would receive mercy. This distinction arose from the fact that Israel would not repent, while Judah had not become so obstinate as to resist the divine influences put forth for her reformation. A second son was named Lo-ammi, meaning Not-my-people, because Israel would not be God's people. In this way the prophet announces a hopeless future for the Northern Kingdom; and it turned out indeed to be true that the people were carried into captivity, and the nation thus broken up was never re-established. He presents a gloomy picture, but closely follows it with a bright promise concerning the individuals who might be found faithful when the Lord should return His captives to their land.

**Israel to be
Restored.**

"Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass that, in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint themselves one head, and shall go up from the land; for great shall be the day of Jezreel. Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi; and to your sisters, Ruhamah." Hosea 1:10-2:1.

This is a clear prediction that the people who were about to be cast off by Jehovah were not to be wholly lost, but that they should again be gathered with the children of Judah into one people, and return from captivity. This does not promise a reorganization of Northern Israel into a nation separate from Judah as it had been for two hundred and fifty years, but a union of the two peoples into one nation as in the days of David and Solomon.

This could be accomplished only by a return of individuals from exile, because the national character of both Israel and Judah was destroyed by the Assyrians and Babylonians. At that time the people who formerly would not be called "my people" were to be called "sons of the living God." Accordingly they were to say to their brethren "Ammi," which means My-people; and to their sisters "Ruhamah," which means Obtained-mercy. Thus the prophet points to a distant time when Jehovah will restore the faithful descendants of the evil generation to whom Hosea spoke. This implies some ulterior purpose in the mind of God to be accomplished through this people. The expressions "my people" and "sons of the living God" imply that the future Israel was to have a very close relationship with Jehovah and to enjoy rich blessings at His hands. To a certain extent this was fulfilled in Palestine after the Exile; but it finds a far richer fulfilment in that more intimate relationship which Christian Israel has with God and in the more perfect blessings bestowed on those who by the spirit of adoption cry, Abba, Father.

3. *Efforts Toward Restoration.*

Gifts
Withdrawn.

(1) A Restoration of Israel is attempted by withdrawing God's gifts from the people. Hosea 2:2-3. Hosea compares Israel to his own

unfaithful wife, who has forsaken him and her children, and followed her lovers. She shall receive no mercy, but be forsaken by her husband until starvation and distress compel her to return to him. She did not know that he was her support, and that when his supply of food and clothing should be denied, she would come to desperate distress. So Israel has forsaken Jehovah to worship other gods, and has been unmindful of the gifts from Jehovah's hands by which she has been sustained. Now Jehovah will withhold the wine and oil and grain and wool and flax, until Israel shall languish with hunger and nakedness. All the mirth of her feasts, her sabbaths and her solemn assemblies shall cease; her vines and fruit-trees shall be laid waste, and her wealth shall be taken from her. After that she will awaken to her wretchedness, forsake her worship of Baalim,

and return to Jehovah as before. Then a great reformation will occur. The very name of Baal shall no longer be mentioned by Israel, even as a familiar word for husband*; and Jehovah will even make a covenant with the beasts and birds, that battle shall cease out of the land, and they shall dwell safely. Israel shall be betrothed anew unto Jehovah for ever; and this betrothal shall be made in righteousness, justice, mercy and faithfulness. Then Jehovah will answer the call of Israel when they plead for harvests of grain and vintages of wine and oil: and then will He call them "my people," and they call Him "my God." Thus by the withdrawal of gifts Israel shall learn the follies of her idolatry and be restored to the service of Jehovah. This is based on the condition of Israel's repentance; and if such a restoration as this did not occur before the people were carried into captivity, it was because they did not repent. If after the captivity some families were restored to their land and the favor of God; it was because they disavowed the sins of their fathers.

**Sending to
Exile.**

(2) A restoration of Israel is sought by sending the people into exile. Hosea iii. The prophet carries on the same figure of his unfaithful wife, whom Jehovah bids him to love again, and, if possible, restore to his home. He finds her in bond, and redeems her for a few pieces of silver and a little barley. He brings her to his home where she is kept for a season, that he may confirm his love to her and win her heart again. This is used to illustrate the fact that Israel shall for a season be shut off from king, and prince, and sacrifice, in order that she may with more earnest

*The word **baal** meant lord, and might be applied to a divinity or to a husband. Probably in the days of King Saul it was used for Jehovah; for Saul named his fourth son Eshbaal (II. Chr. 8:33), which means "man of the Lord," and we have no reason to believe that Saul worshipped the god Baal of the Sidonians. Much later, when Hosea's prophesy came to fulfilment, and the name Baal became shameful, and a Hebrew would not pronounce it, the name Eshbaal was changed to Ishbosheth, man of shame (II. Sam. 2:8). Likewise Jerubbaal (Jud. 6:32) was changed to Jerubbesheth (II. Sam. 11:21), Merribaal (I. Chr. 8:34) to Mephibosheth (II. Sam. 4:4), and Beeliada (I. Chr. 14:7) to Eliada (II. Sam. 5:16). These changes must have been made after the name Baal became shameful, hence after the Babylonian Exile. While it shows the fulfilment of Hosea's prophesy, it was obedient to the command in Ex. 23:13, "Make no mention of the name of other gods."

devotion seek after Jehovah as her God and David as her king. Thus the Exile is predicted as a means, not to destroy Israel, but to restore her to allegiance to Jehovah.

**Question of
Hosea's Grief.**

The representations made by the prophet in the opening chapters of this book concerning the state of his household are very remarkable in any view that we may entertain concerning it. That Jehovah should command him to marry a wicked woman does not comport well with our best ideas of the character of Jehovah. It must also have been a very great sacrifice of Hosea that he should be involved in such grief and disgrace as his unfaithful wife brought to him, and it seems improbable that God would require such a sacrifice merely that the circumstance should be used to illustrate a sermon to Israel. On the other hand, if we suppose that Hosea had no such experience as that which he describes, but offers an imaginary account as a parable to illustrate the unfaithfulness of the nation to God, it seems strange that he would make the matter so personal and thereby bring disgrace unjustly upon his wife and children. It is certain that the lesson would make a much deeper impression upon the people if they knew that their speaker had actually experienced the horrors of a wrecked and ruined home. It is possible that the woman was in good repute when the marriage occurred, and that she is represented otherwise only by anticipation, but that she became disloyal at some later time,* possibly before the birth of her children. It seems that Hosea delivers his lessons in parts from time to time as the affairs of his household are developing. This implies that he spoke out of the sadness of his own heart, and thus presented more than once to Israel a living picture of

*A. B. Davison expresses a similar view: "A wife of whoredoms does not mean a woman already a sinner; nor yet a woman with a propensity to unchastity, a sense which the word could not bear. A wife of whoredoms is explained by 'children of whoredoms.' The children did not yet exist; they were born in the prophet's house; for Hosea did not marry a woman with a family. In like manner the woman when taken was not yet that which she afterwards became. If the events to be real, the words are written from a much later period in the prophet's history. Looking back on his experiences with Gomer, and all that he had suffered and learned through them, Hosea felt that his impulse to take this woman to wife was the beginning of Jehovah's speaking to him (cf. Jer. 32:8)." Hastings' Bible Dict., Art. Hosea.

the awful shame and unfaithfulness of the nation in departing from Jehovah to serve other Gods.

Expressions of Love.

(3) A restoration of Israel is attempted by expressions of love. Hosea xi. 8-11.

“How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I cast thee off, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboiim? my heart is turned within me, my compassions are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee; and I will not come in wrath. They shall walk after Jehovah, who will roar like a lion; for he will roar, and the children shall come trembling from the west. They shall come trembling as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria; and I will make them to dwell in their houses, saith Jehovah.”

The Thought.

This contains a very earnest plea by Jehovah to Northern Israel, apparently in the form of a last appeal before a separation between Israel and God must take place. God is finding it necessary to destroy His people as he destroyed Admah and Zeboiim when he overthrew the land of Sodom (Gen. 14:2, 3; 19:25). When Jehovah says, “I am God, and not man,” He implies that although man may cease to love, He is constant; although He must overthrow Ephraim, it is not to be done in wrath, but the act is to be an expression of justice mingled with fatherly affection, and the consequence will be that children of Jehovah shall come from all lands trembling in filial reverence.

National Resurrection.

(4) A restoration of Israel is attempted by a promise of national resurrection. Hosea xiii. 14:

“I will ransom them from the power of Sheol; I will redeem them from death: O death, where are thy plagues? O Sheol, where is thy destruction? repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.”

This language implies that Israel is doomed to a national death, because she is already hopelessly corrupt; and if she is to be rescued at all, it must be only from Sheol.* This implies

*The American Revisers have displaced the word “hell” in the A. V. with “Sheol” throughout the O. T.; but the English Revisers place Sheol in the poetical books; in other books they put “grave” or “pit” with Sheol in the margin, but in Isa. xiv, where the King of Babylon is mentioned, although it is Sheol in the Hebrew, the English Revisers say, “He is brought down to hell.” (!) In the N. T. the

that the repentance of Israel can now no longer be anticipated, and it is certain that God will not repent of His decision to punish Israel; so her fate is sealed. Only a resurrection will restore her. The Exile is here presented under the figure of the grave; and Israel carried away on account of her sins is as one dead. The prophet implies that a remnant of Israel shall return from captivity as one arising from the tomb. The later history describes the carrying away of Israel and their settlement in certain cities of Assyria (2 Kings 17:6); but we know little concerning the return of any descendants of these Israelites to Palestine, although it is probable that some came back with the Jews, and from that time forth were identified with the Jewish nation. The rest of Israel were hopelessly lost in foreign lands. Many efforts have been made in modern times to prove that these lost tribes of Israel drifted westward into Europe and became the ancestors of the English people and others, but the evidences offered are wholly unsatisfactory to the majority of scholars.

**Confession and
Blessing.**

(5) A restoration of Israel is sought by presenting a picture of confession and blessing. Hosea xiv. 2-9. The prophet urges Israel to return to Jehovah with the confession that they have committed iniquity in His sight, that they will no more depend upon Assyria instead of Jehovah, and no more call upon their false and worthless gods. If they will do this, God will heal their backsliding, turn away His anger, love them freely, and give them great prosperity.

**Messianic
Features.**

The Messianic features of all these prophetic efforts to restore Israel to her former loyalty to Jehovah are as follows: (1) Jehovah is represented as a husband to Israel. The sad illustration of Hosea's faithless wife is offered with the intent to make Israel see, not only the folly and disgrace of her departure from God to whom she was solemnly espoused in covenant at the foot of Mount Sinai (Ex. 24:1-8), but also the infinite patience and longing

word Hades displaces "hell" wherever it is Hades in the original, but "hell" is placed where it is Gehenna in Greek. Sheol and Hades mean simply the sphere of the dead, but Gehenna means the place of final punishment.

love of Jehovah over the wayward nation and His earnest attempts to win her back to Himself. It is appropriate to regard this as a Messianic element in the prophecy, because Jehovah's great care for Israel in contrast with His temporary neglect of other nations must have been due to the purpose of accomplishing through them the Messianic promise made to Abraham and often repeated to his descendants. It is notable that here for the first time the figure of the husband is used by the prophets to illustrate the relation of God to the people of Israel. (2) God will punish Israel in order to bring about her reformation. Instead of utterly destroying the people, he punished them for their sins with the aim of securing to them a more loyal disposition. This again points forward to the ends to be accomplished through their future faithfulness. (3) Even after the nation shall find its grave in exile, its resurrection as from the dead will be possible, that the divine purpose apparently so nearly thwarted by Israel's disobedience may not fail of its final accomplishment. The nation is to be the means of bringing salvation to all the earth, and it is Hosea's part to save it, if possible, from obliteration, and to prophesy that although it may descend to the very verge of destruction, it is the purpose of Jehovah to rescue it to the praise of His own name.

SUMMARY.

1. The wicked in Israel and among other nations shall be overthrown by divine judgment, and those who have persecuted and despoiled God's people shall fall as an army defeated in battle.

2. The chosen people shall be vindicated in judgment, be cleansed from their sins, have the presence of God in their midst, and be greatly prospered under His providence.

3. When Israel shall be sifted on account of her sins by being carried into captivity, every grain of good in the nation shall be saved, that the whole nation be not extirpated.

4. The tabernacle of David's royal power which shall be overthrown by the captivity shall be rebuilt; and Israel now soon to be removed from their land are to be replanted never to be plucked up again.

5. God is a husband to Israel; He is grieved over her disloyalty to Him, and yet with persistent love seeks her reformation. He will punish her for her unfaithfulness with the intent to betroth her anew unto Himself in righteousness and constancy.

6. Israel must come down into death for her sins; but she shall enjoy a national resurrection by Jehovah's power; and this is assured because her God will not repent of His purpose either to punish the nation in captivity or to save her from extinction.

We have already noted that hitherto each period of prophecy is marked by a distinguishing feature due to the character of the age in which it arose. In the period of the patriarchs the Messianic predictions assume the form of family forecasts, in which almost every statement relates to the descendants of those by whom the messages are spoken, because in that period before the founding of nations the life of the family was most conspicuous. In the Mosaic period when the nation is being established, and the national laws and organization are most prominent in the minds of prophet and people, the predictions assume national forms, and relate mainly to the future of the chosen nation. In the Davidic period when the monarchy is being established, and all eyes are turned toward the king, the prophecies relate chiefly to the future of the king and his descendants and the perpetuity of their throne together with the righteousness and universality of their reigns. Now in this period of earlier prophets when apostasy and impending judgment require the attention of the prophet as a reformer in the midst of a perverse people, the predictions are marked by allusions to destructive punishments and subsequent reformations. In every case the historical situation of the prophet and his hearers supplies the leading figure by which the prophetic message is illustrated, and the future is described in terms adapted to a just and natural expectation of the age. This does not imply that the prophecy is a human and purely natural product, but indicates that God sent His messages in forms suited to attract the attention and to meet the highest reasonable expectation of the people to whom they were delivered.

General
Character of
the Period.

CHAPTER V.

PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH'S TIME.

1. *The Coming King of Peace.* *Zech. ix. 9, 10.*

Time.

The text of this paragraph and the next two included in Zech. ix-xi is assigned to the time of Isaiah, because (1) it refers distinctly to "all the tribes of Israel" (9:1), to Ephraim (9:10, 13; 10:7), and to Joseph (10:6) as yet in the land, which Zechariah living after the Exile could hardly have written; (2) it refers to Assyria and Egypt as existing powers, not yet overthrown, but in the future to be "brought down," because they had carried away Jehovah's people into their lands (10:10, 11), which conditions did not exist in the days of Zechariah; (3) it predicts the scattering of the people of Israel in foreign countries, especially Egypt and Assyria, and the return of these exiles to their own country where they shall walk in the name of Jehovah (10:9-12), which had already taken place before the days of Zechariah; (4) the style of the writing is notably different from that of the earlier chapters of Zechariah; and (5) in Matt. 27:9 a quotation from Zech. 11:12, 13 is attributed to Jeremiah with no evidence of a transcriber's error or other change of text in Matthew, and yet our present book of Jeremiah does not contain the passage. Why the name of Jeremiah appears in connection with the quotation is not surely known; possibly it is the result of some accident which we have not the means of tracing, or possibly these chapters in the book of Zechariah were written by a man named Jeremiah, but who lived at a time earlier than the prophet of that name whose writings are found in the Old Testament.*

*There is much uncertainty on this point. Meyer regards the name Jeremiah in Matt. 27:9, as "being simply a slip of the memory, such, however, as might readily enough occur through a reminiscence of Jer. 18:2." He refers to Morrison, who gives a detailed list of explanations,

The historical allusions suit the time of Isaiah and probably between 740 and 722 B. C.

Text.

The coming king is described by our prophet in the following words:

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee; he is just and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off; and he shall speak peace unto the nations: and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. ”

Character of the King.

The king here described is probably not humiliated, since the ass was honored by the Israelites (Judges 5:10); still, the scene is less pompous than if the king had been represented as riding upon a war-horse. While not humiliated, he is clearly announced as just and lowly, bearing a peaceful disposition toward the nations of the earth. Under his influence the war-chariot and the battle-bow shall disappear from the land; nevertheless his dominion shall extend throughout the world.

New Testament Application.

This prophecy is quoted in Matt. 21:5 and John 12:15 in connection with the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem a few days before his death. The occasion was recognized by the disciples of the Lord as a literal fulfilment of the prediction. While the literal fulfilments of apparently unimportant items of prophetic utterances are rare,* nevertheless there is no reason for not regarding this as such a fulfilment. We should note that not merely the external features of the prophecy find a parallel in the procession of the Savior and his followers before the gates of the Holy City, but the very heart of the prophet's message is also fulfilled. Jesus was indeed, as well as in appearance, lowly and peaceful, coming to his people without boastful pretensions or regal display and who holds “that there must have been a transcriber's error in the very earliest copy of our Gospel.” This latter view, although lacking any proof, is certainly a reasonable assumption.

*Unimportant items are not intended to be fulfilled. Items that are intended to be literally fulfilled are never unimportant; for prophecy does not descend to trivialities, but deals with vital principles. Details in prophecy and fulfilment are but the vehicles of precious truth. They are the straws that mark the course of a trade-wind.

play; but on the contrary, in all his demeanor throughout his whole ministry, humble, gentle and unpretentious. He was, in fact, exactly what this prophecy describes. Probably the animal upon which he rode is the least important feature, both of the utterance and of the fulfilment; and indeed it was only one small indication of the vital and abiding character of the Messiah, his deep and glorious humility. No grace of his divine life more adorned his relations to men and his ministry in their behalf than his sympathetic condescension to their lowly estate.

**An Unfulfilled
Item.**

One item of this prophecy finds no fulfilment in the triumphal entry of Jesus into the city of Jerusalem. It is the universal dominion which is here promised to the coming king. Although the humanity of the Messiah has not been emphasized in previous utterances of the prophets, this unlimited reach of His sovereignty sounds like an echo from the Davidic period. Its reappearance in this place is perhaps the more appropriate because it serves to add dignity to a prediction which otherwise might less commend the future king to the consideration of his people.

2. *The Restoration of Israel. Zech. x.*

The Prophecy.

In the historical background of this chapter we may clearly discern the departure of Israel from Jehovah to follow after "teraphim" that have spoken vanity, diviners that have seen a lie, and have told false dreams, to give comfort in vain. In this account the anger of Jehovah is kindled against the shepherds of His flock, and their punishment is imminent. Israel is exhorted to ask of Jehovah if she wishes to receive blessings; for all the resources of nature, of war and of dominion are His. He will send rain and grass in the field and victory in battle. He further promises:

"And I will strengthen the house of Judah,
And I will save the house of Joseph,
And I will bring them back;
For I have mercy upon them;
And they shall be as though I had not cast them off;
For I am Jehovah, their God, and I will hear them.
And they of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man,
And their heart shall rejoice as through wine;
Yea, their children shall see it, and rejoice;
Their heart shall be glad in Jehovah.

I will hiss for them, and gather them;
 For I have redeemed them;
 And they shall increase as they have increased.
 And I will sow them among the peoples;
 And they shall remember me in far countries;
 And they with their children shall live, and shall return.
 I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt,
 And gather them out of Assyria;
 And I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon;
 And room shall not be found for them.
 And he will pass through the sea of affliction,
 And will smite the waves in the sea,
 And all the depths of the Nile shall dry up;
 And the pride of Assyria shall be brought down,
 And the scepter of Egypt shall depart.
 And I will strengthen them in Jehovah;
 And they shall walk up and down in his name,
 saith Jehovah." Zech. x. 6-12.

**Content of
the Prophecy.**

This prediction appears to be closely related to those of Amos and Hosea, especially in the fact that an exile is foretold which is to be followed by a restoration of Israel to the land of their fathers. In addition to this, Jehovah here proclaims Himself to be Israel's God and deliverer. This implies not only the remarkable constancy of Jehovah toward His wayward people as in Hosea, but also the close and indissoluble relationship between them and Himself, evidently pointing to some future consummation of divine purpose through Israel. What this purpose is, at least in part, is made manifest in this passage. It is Jehovah's intent that His people shall be confirmed in their devotion and service to Him, and that they shall walk "up and down"—that is, in all their ways—in His name. This prophecy compasses only God's purpose respecting Israel, because it is His relation to this people which is now in jeopardy, and which must precede the rescue of the Gentile world from sin. All this is clearly a part of the Messianic plan, and by no means an unimportant part.

3. *The Rejected Shepherd. Zech. xi. 1-14.*

Occasion.

If we are correct in thinking that probably this part of the book of Zechariah was written at a time considerably earlier than the composition of the first eight chapters, the most appropriate time would seem to be in the days of Pekah, king of Israel, probably when the invasion of

Tiglath-Pilezer was at hand, which occurred B. C. 734-732. This was not long before the fall of Samaria (722) and the exile of Northern Israel (2 Ki. 15:28). It is certainly a time of impending disaster and desolation; for the prophet calls upon Lebanon to wail for her fallen cedars and Bashan to mourn for the loss of her oaks, while the shepherds and even the young lions are to languish, because the country is laid waste. Israel is regarded by Jehovah as a flock that is being fed for slaughter.

The prophet records his commission from Jehovah and its execution as follows:

“Thus saith Jehovah my God: Feed the flock of slaughter; whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty; and they that sell them say, Blessed be Jehovah, for I am rich; and their own shepherds pity them not. For I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith Jehovah; but, lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbor's hand, and into the hand of his king; and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver them. So I fed the flock of slaughter, verily the poor of the flock. And I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; and I fed the flock. And I cut off the three shepherds in one month; for my soul was weary of them, and their soul also loathed me. Then I said, I will not feed you; that which dieth, let it die; and that which is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let them that are left eat every one the flesh of another. And I took my staff Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the peoples. And it was broken in that day; and thus the poor of the flock that gave heed unto me knew that it was the word of Jehovah. And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my hire; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my hire thirty pieces of silver. And Jehovah said unto me, Cast it unto the potter, the goodly price that I was prized at by them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver and cast them unto the potter, in the house of Jehovah. Then I cut asunder mine other staff, even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.”

Prophet's
Position.

The prophet here presents himself in the figure of a shepherd caring for the people of Israel as a flock. In his prophetic office it was his duty to teach and direct the nation. The other shepherds, some of whom he dismissed were the religious or political leaders of Israel. Clearly the people in following these leaders had rejected Jehovah and His prophet. It was on account of this that Israel was counted as a flock of slaughter, just as a shepherd might select a few of his sheep to be better fed than the rest, that they might be soon slaughtered for meat.

**The
Symbolism.**

The prophet seeks to make a deep impression upon the minds of his people by presenting his instructions in symbolic form. He takes a staff, and calls it Beauty, and then a little later cuts the staff into two parts. He interprets this to the people as significant of the high estimation in which Jehovah would hold His people if they were faithful; but seeing that they have proved disloyal, their relationship to Jehovah is to be severed as this staff has been cut into two parts. He names another staff Bands to represent the original unity of Judah and Israel in the service of God. This staff is also cut asunder, and the people are taught that it signifies the dissolution of the brotherhood between Judah and Israel. It is not probable that this dissolution is deplored chiefly on account of the political disruption and division so much as because of the departure of Northern Israel from the service of Jehovah. It is with the religious character of such events that the prophet has to do.

**The Prophet's
Income.**

Again, the prophet called upon the people for a compensation for his prophetic labors among them. They gave him the small sum of thirty pieces of silver, doubtless a mere pittance compared with what he should have received. In irony he calls it "the goodly price" at which he was estimated by the people. It was as much as to say, "This is a magnificent sum for all my labors!" Jehovah tells him to pay off the potter who had done some work in the house of God; and we are left to infer that the income for all the prophet's sacred service was only enough to pay off an insignificant potter's bill. The prophet himself disdained to keep the money.

**Quotation
in the
New Testament.**

This passage concerning the thirty pieces of silver and the potter is quoted in Matt. 27:3-10 in connection with the account of Judas the betrayer, who brought back the thirty pieces of money which he had received from the chief priests and elders for delivering up Jesus to them. The priests regarded it unlawful to put this price of blood into the temple-treasury, and therefore determined to purchase a potter's field for a burial ground for strangers. Accordingly, Matthew says, "Then was fulfilled

that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was priced, whom certain of the children of Israel did price; and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me." It cannot be doubted that Matthew regarded the later event a fulfilment of the words in Zechariah; yet the events are not exactly alike, and the language of the prophet does not indicate that his words were intended to express a prediction. It is clear that the two events present a remarkable coincidence; for the amount of money is the same, in each case it was the estimation placed on a man, and in each case the money was paid to a potter. It is not impossible that this coincidence was divinely intended.

The General Truth.

It is notable that a large number of experiences in the life of the Messiah are similar to those of men of God in former times, and usually the gospel writers refer to such coincidences as fulfilments of Old Testament passages. It is not unnatural that in the manifold relations of Jesus to God and to man and in his varied experiences connected with the task of saving the race, he should duplicate many events that occurred in the several relations and labors of the prophets before him who were engaged in saving their nation from the perils of divine wrath. Such experiences of the prophets may have been divinely intended as types of those in the life of Christ. He was to consummate their work, was to share their labors and sufferings, was to live the human life, and gather into himself the ills and sorrows of our common nature, that in all things he might "be made like unto his brethren." In this sense the value of our prophet's words and of the fulfilment mentioned by Matthew may be estimated, and its divine character be discerned.

4. *Isaiah's Commission. Isa. vi.*

Isaiah's Labors. According to Isaiah 1:1, this prophet was the son of Amoz, who is otherwise unknown to us, but who is thought to have been connected with the royal family of Judah; and this is in part confirmed by the fact that most of Isaiah's prophecies appear to have been delivered in Jerusalem, and many of them at the king's court. Isaiah

prophesied "in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah." The first prophecy by this author appears in the present paragraph "in the year that king Uzziah died" (6:1),* which is estimated to have been about 740 B. C.; and the last prophecy which may be dated was delivered about 701 B. C. How much longer Isaiah continued his labors, we know not; but it is certain that his ministry was a very long and eventful one. According to a tradition expressed by Justin Martyr (about 150 A. D.), the prophet was slain by king Manasseh by being sawn asunder. According to 2 Chron. 26:22, Isaiah wrote in addition to his prophecies the lives of Uzziah and Hezekiah. The labors of this prophet were mostly directed against a great moral and spiritual decline in the Kingdom of Judah, which culminated only at the very close of the period in which he is known to us. It is probable that for about forty years he faced an irresistible current of idolatry and immorality for which the invasion by the Assyrians under Sennacherib brought a well deserved punishment. The present vision occurred when this decline had already gained too great a momentum to be checked by the most enthusiastic and able efforts of Isaiah in his best days. The character of his commission clearly manifests the degree of perversity already reached by the people at the close of Uzziah's reign.

His Vision.

Isaiah saw a vision of Jehovah seated upon an exalted throne in great glory and surrounded by seraphim, who spoke to each other in responsive praise, "Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory." This was followed by an earthquake, and the house was filled with smoke. Isaiah was keenly conscious of his unworthiness to stand in such a presence, and exclaimed, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts." Then one of the seraphim touched Isaiah's lips with a live coal taken from the altar, and said, "Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin forgiven." Then he

*The book of Isaiah is not arranged in the chronological order of the prophet's work. The vision of Isaiah in chapter vi has every appearance of being the call of the prophet to his office, and hence it must have preceded the messages in chapters i-v.

heard the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" To which Isaiah replied, "Here am I; send me." Then followed Jehovah's commission to him, which in all probability is the first message that he received from God for his people. The vision had deeply impressed him with the dignity and authority of Jehovah, which would qualify him for a more faithful service. His lips had been touched by fire as a symbol of the purification of his speech;* and the pardon of his sins made him consciously the more worthy messenger of God.

His Message.

Isaiah is told to go and tell his people, "Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of his people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes: lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn again, and be healed." This is undoubtedly an ironical message. He is to tell the people that he is come to shut their eyes, which would be the message most likely to make them open their eyes. That he should come to stop their ears and prevent their understanding the Lord and turning to Him, would be best suited to make them listen to the divine message, to consider its meaning and be influenced by its warning. Isaiah then asked the Lord how long the people's eyes and ears and heart were to be closed against divine truth: and he is told that it shall be "until cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without man, and the land become utterly waste, and Jehovah have removed men far away, and the forsaken places be many in the midst of the land." This clearly signifies that the nation was perverse and corrupt, and that if the people would not listen to the advices from heaven they must expect that their cities should be overthrown, their houses demolished and their land laid waste by an enemy whom Jehovah would bring upon

*The popular idea that the "fire" represented the purification of sins, is incorrect. The notion is probably imported into this passage from the figure of purifying metals by fire, as in Mal. 3:2, 3; and it finds encouragement here by the words which follow in close connection, "and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sins forgiven." But these words do not explain the touch with the coal, but express an additional fact, and leave the touch to find its evident explanation in the fact that it was the mouth that was to be touched and that the man was to become a speaker.

them. Such a message could reasonably be sent only to a nation already hardened in sin.

Another statement by Jehovah is added to The "Holy Seed," this commission: "And if there be yet a tenth in it, it also shall in turn be eaten up: as a terebinth, and as an oak, whose stock remaineth, when they are felled; so the holy seed is the stock thereof." Here the nation is compared to a tree which has been felled, but whose stock or stump is left standing. While the tree is overthrown and most of it carried away, a part of it is permitted to stand. So the nation of Judah shall be overthrown and carried away, and yet a part of it shall remain undestroyed; and this part will be "the holy seed." The Messianic feature of this passage is the prediction that the sinful nation shall fall for its iniquity, but not be utterly destroyed. As in Hosea, Northern Israel should not become extinct although carried into captivity, so now Judah will be preserved only in part, and this part shall be a nucleus of the future nation that shall spring from them. The same Messianic purpose stands back of the utterances of both these prophets.

5. *Jehovah's Exalted House. Isa. ii. 2-4.*

The Promise. As an encouragement to the people of Judah, Isaiah presents a promise for future days that contains a beautiful and attractive ideal condition of Jehovah's people:

"And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. And he will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Authorship. This prophecy in almost exactly the same words is found also in Micah 4:1-3. Since Micah and Isaiah were contemporary prophets, it is not easy to say which is the author of the prediction. The connection of the

passage with the context is more natural in Micah, which would seem to favor that prophet as the author; but Isaiah was by far the greater and more original writer, which seems to designate him as the probable author. In such a balance of probabilities, some have suggested that perhaps both of these prophets copied this passage from some older writer unknown to us. Fortunately the meaning and value of the utterance are not dependent upon date or authorship. The passage does not contain historical allusions, and is purely a prediction of conditions certainly very distant in the future.

Messianic Ideas.

As in the case of many other Messianic prophecies, this message served to encourage the people of Judah to prepare for a more honorable and worthy period of personal and national life. The leading Messianic items of this prophecy are: (1) Jehovah's house shall be established in a conspicuous place among the nations. Clearly this hints that the worship of Jehovah will be more widely known and exercise a stronger influence among men than heretofore. (2) The Gentiles will seek this exalted house of Jehovah. This expresses still more plainly the prevalence of the worship of Jehovah among the nations at some future time. (3) Instruction shall go forth from the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem to all the peoples of the earth. This is a clear prediction of the extensive spiritual influence which the Hebrew people will at a later time exert among the Gentiles, and points to a time when the nations shall be taught concerning Jehovah and learn the kind of service that will be well pleasing to Him. This will constitute the people of Judah the instructors of the world in religious matters. (4) Jehovah's admonition, when made known to all nations, will bring universal peace. This contemplates a complete social, as well as religious, revolution of sentiment throughout the world; and emphasizes in a most remarkable manner the pacific power of Jehovah's word.

Fulfilment.

The ideal character of this prophecy is evident; for, in view of the disposition of men and nations in Isaiah's day, such a transformation of world-wide extent did not lie within the range of ordinary possibilities. If we inquire for a fulfilment of this prophecy in history, we shall

be able to trace it only in part, and in our own day find perhaps some indications of a still larger fulfilment in the future. Certainly the proclamation of the Christian faith went forth from Jerusalem immediately after the coronation of the Messianic King (Acts ii), and gradually has reached the most distant lands. The instruction concerning Jehovah has spread abroad among the nations in the preaching of Christ among the Gentiles from the days of Paul until this time, and never more than at present has this work made progress in the midst of heathen peoples. The present zeal of the church gives some prospect of world-wide evangelization. Moreover, the progress of the Christian faith has wrought a deep and ever deepening disposition in the hearts of many people of influence in the greatest of modern nations to dispense with war as a means of adjusting international differences, and to resort to regular courts of arbitration, which affords some prospect of perpetual peace. The growth of this sentiment promises a fuller accomplishment of the prophet's prediction than men have hitherto seen. We may be assured that the natural effect of Christian teaching is perfect peace among men, and if this teaching shall ever prevail in all national counsels, the day to which Isaiah looked forward will surely dawn.

6. *The Purification of Zion. Isa. iv. 2-6.*

The Text.

"In that day shall the branch of Jehovah be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem; when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of justice, and by the spirit of burning. And Jehovah will create over the whole habitation of Mt. Zion, and over her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory shall be spread a covering. And there shall be a pavilion for a shade in the day-time from the heat, and for a refuge and for a covert from storms and from rain."

The "Branch."

The "branch," better translated "growth",* as here predicted cannot be regarded as a per-

*Canon George Rawlinson (Pulpit Com.) attempts to defend the view that the "branch" here is the Messiah; because the same word is used

son and applied to the Messiah; for it is in parallelism with "the fruit of the land," which must refer to the products of the soil. With this the context, which describes not the work of the "branch" as a person, but the work of Jehovah, is in full accord. The beauty and glory of Judah's products in contrast with former desolations will be appropriate rewards for a cleansed and consecrated people; for in Isaiah's day the city of Jerusalem is full of vice and perversity of heart, which must be cleansed away until only a remnant of the population be left; and he predicts that this remnant shall be called "holy," because the spirit of God shall inflict justice and burn out the corruption of the city.

**The Cloud
and Covering.**

After the cleansing of Jerusalem, Jehovah is to create over the whole city and its population "a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night," which reminds the reader of the cloud by day and pillar of fire by night which manifested the presence of Jehovah together with His guidance and protection with Israel when in the wilderness in the days of Moses. The probability that the prophet borrows this figure from the earlier history of his people requires us to interpret the cloud and fire in this prophecy as symbols of Jehovah's presence with the city both for consolation and protection. To these also and over all the glory of them, shall be added "a covering." This probably means a sort of tabernacle spread over the city to represent in a metaphor that the city was to dwell in a tent of Jehovah as a place of refuge from all dangers. While these figures appear somewhat crude to our modern thought, they were in accord with the picturesque ideas of the ancient Hebrews, and the more so because of the constant use of tents by the oriental people in and around Palestine. The presence and protection of Jehovah were very important elements in the future prosperity of the holy city.

in Zech. 3:8 and 6:12 for a person presumably the Messiah, and likewise in Jer. 23:5 and 33:15. Even Isaiah himself in 11:1-5, using another Hebrew word for "branch," applies it to the Messiah. It must be replied that these passages, however clear they may be themselves, ought not to be employed to interpret the present use of the word against its own context.

**Messianic
Features:**

The "Branch." (1) At some future time "the Branch of Jehovah shall be beautiful and glorious." Since this is a reward of Jehovah's favor to Judah, it pictures future prosperity as springing up fresh and glorious out of the old desolations brought on by the sins of the people like the sprouting of young trees in a wasted forest.

Fruitfulness.

(2) The fruitfulness of the land looks forward to the continued blessing with which Jehovah was to reward Judah for faithful and devoted service. It is that natural prosperity which inevitably follows an industrious and honorable life, and which therefore attends a thoroughly Christian civilization.

**Cleansing and
Sanctification.**

(3) Jehovah will cleanse and sanctify His people. The cleansing refers to the forgiveness of sins, because it was the moral filth of Jerusalem that is described by the prophet throughout the context in which this prophecy is found. The holiness of the people does not necessarily imply absolute sinfulness, since that ideal must be unattainable in a life attended by the necessary weaknesses and limitations of men in the flesh; but it signifies a consecration of the people to the work and ways of Jehovah. This is shown by the frequent use of the word in connection with the priesthood of Israel and their devotion to the service of God at the altar and in the temple. Such cleansing and sanctification are attained by voluntary acceptance of Christ by his people, so that the whole people of God in the Christian age may thoroughly enjoy these privileges. In the case of every individual the sins of the former life are purged away by appropriating the blood of Christ. While the city of Jerusalem may have secured the divine favor at some time before the coming of the Messiah, surely it never became so acceptable and so devoted to Jehovah as the Christian may become, and hence never so well fulfilled this prophecy.

**Presence
of God.**

(4) Consequent to the sacred relations between Jehovah and His people just noted, is the promise of the divine presence, guidance and

protection. The value of this promise is seen in the necessity of the divine favor in the affairs of men to protect them in the times of temptation as promised in the New Testament, to direct the individual life when national laws and human counsels are faulty or uncertain, and to support the hopes and aspirations of the people of God in their arduous and often discouraging work of evangelizing and saving the world. Such a presence of God is far more important and precious than that which attended Israel in the wilderness.

7. *Immanuel. Isa. vii. 10-17.*

**Political
Situation.**

This prophecy was uttered in the days of Ahaz, king of Judah, at a time when Rezin, the king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel were forming an alliance against Ahaz, to compel him to join them in a military campaign against the king of Assyria, with the intent to overthrow Assyrian domination west of the river Euphrates. Ahaz was greatly alarmed, and was about to send an embassy to the king of Assyria asking him for an alliance with Judah against Rezin and Pekah. This was probably about 735 B. C. Isaiah under divine direction persistently advised Ahaz not to form an alliance with Assyria, because it would result in such complications with the greedy Assyrians as would certainly prove embarrassing to Judah in the future; but that it would be better to depend upon Jehovah for the overthrow of the allied enemy. Such was the political situation when Isaiah and his son went out of the city of Jerusalem to the upper pool of the Gihon valley to converse with King Ahaz concerning his reliance upon Jehovah. Isaiah urges that the alliance of his enemies will not prevail against Ahaz, if he will trust in Jehovah; but that both Syria and Ephraim shall be defeated, and that within sixty-five years Ephraim shall be so badly broken that it shall cease to be a people.

King Ahaz had so little faith in a deliverance by Jehovah that he was unwilling to follow Isaiah's advice, and hence Isaiah brought on this conversation:

"Ask thee a sign of Jehovah thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I

tempt Jehovah. And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David: Is it a small thing for you to weary men, that ye will weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, when he knoweth to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken. Jehovah will bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—even the king of Assyria."

From this it is clear that Isaiah was offering a miraculous sign to Ahaz to prove that Jehovah was ready to sustain his advice. Although Ahaz does not believe, he is so stubborn that he will not ask for a sign, but pretends that he does not wish to put Jehovah to a test. Isaiah responds that the course pursued by Ahaz wearied the patience of both man and God; but that Jehovah would give Ahaz a sign, whether he asked it or not. It is in this connection that Isaiah introduces the prophecy concerning the virgin.

**The Child
Immanuel.**

Isaiah informs Ahaz that before a young woman shall bear a son and the child come to know good from evil the two hostile kings shall be overthrown. The child shall be named Immanuel, meaning God-with-us, as a monument of Isaiah's prophecy that Jehovah is with Judah for her protection. But since Ahaz is determined to send for the Assyrians, they will surely come, and will desolate the land of Judah so thoroughly that the child will have nothing but curdled milk and honey for subsistence. The bringing of the Assyrians shall be the worst calamity that has befallen Judah since the day of the division of the kingdom under Rehoboam. Such seems to be the fitness of the prophecy at the time it was delivered.

**New Testament
Application.**

In Matt. 1:20-23 a part of this prophecy is quoted and applied to the virgin Mary and the child Jesus. After relating the announcement by the angel to Joseph concerning the conception by the Holy Spirit and the birth of the child, he adds,

"Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us."

From this it is evident that Matthew regards the birth of Jesus as a fulfilment of this prophecy; but the sense in which it is a fulfilment requires some attention. The following views have been proposed:

Direct Prediction. (1) Some scholars hold that Isaiah spoke directly concerning Mary and Jesus, and that he did not have in view any mother and child in the days of Ahaz. It is generally held along with this view that Isaiah meant strictly a virgin, and hence foretold necessarily a miraculous birth. Certainly the word used by Isaiah (*almah*) does not exclude the idea of a married woman; for he could readily have used another word (*bethulah*) which would have signified a virgin and left no ambiguity. The word here used simply means a young woman, whether married or unmarried.* The context of the passage in Isaiah clearly indicates that the child of whom the prophet spoke was to be a sign to Ahaz, and that before it should discriminate between good and evil the two hostile kings were to be overthrown. The birth of Jesus could be no sign to Ahaz, and could afford no indication of date of the enemies' defeat. These facts are adverse, if not fatal to this view.

*The view that the Hebrew word in this passage means strictly a virgin is defended by Canon Rawlinson (Pulpit Com.). His points are: 1. The word is so used in all other passages. But Prov. 30:19; Song 6:8 are very doubtful. 2. The LXX. translates by the word *parthenos*, which means a virgin. But even that word is sometimes used for a married woman (see Liddel and Scott's Lex.); and we may not forget that while the LXX. uses *parthenos*, all the other early Greek translations of the O. T. have *neanis*, meaning a young woman married or unmarried. 3. The announcement here requires the meaning virgin to be worthy of the grand prelude: "The Lord himself shall give you a sign—Behold!" But such a prelude is fully justified by Isaiah's expectation regarding the child Immanuel (cf. 8:8; 9:6, 7), without assuming that the virginity of the mother was the matter of astonishment. Indeed the serious weakness of most interpretations of this prophecy is the heavy emphasis laid on the mother instead of the child. It is not the woman that has any part in the context of this utterance, or that reappears in any way in related predictions; nor in the context has the character of the birth any bearing on the prediction about the hostile kings. Even as a wonder, the virginity of the mother could be to Ahaz only an event of doubtful character. These remarks have no bearing against the miraculous conception of Jesus, which rests on very different grounds.

Not Messianic. (2) Other interpreters hold that the prophecy is intended only to furnish a sign to Ahaz that Isaiah's political advices were ordered by Jehovah, and that the prophet did not have any reference at all to the Messianic events recorded in Matthew. According to this view, the name Immanuel has no significance connected with the Messiah, but arose because the mother of such a child in the days of Ahaz in a time of peril would naturally give her child this name expressive of her hope that Jehovah would rescue His people from the danger threatened by Syria and Ephraim. Against this view some urge that Isaiah plainly implies the devastation of Judah, and hence that Jehovah was not with that people;* for he says that the child shall eat butter and honey when he comes to choose between good and evil, which means that by that time the country will be in such a plight that the child will have nothing else to eat. The force of this objection has constrained some critics to reject Isa. 7:15 from the text. This view certainly sets at naught the teaching of Matthew altogether.

Typical. (3) Others regard the prophecy as typical. The young woman and the child lived in the days of Ahaz, and were a sign to the king; and although the country of Judah was desolated by the Assyrian army as Isaiah foretold, yet God was with His people in saving them from utter destruction, which was notably manifested when the army of Sennacherib was stricken by the hand of Jehovah when Jerusalem was almost ready to surrender (2 Kings 19:35). All of this, however, was a type of the Messianic birth and the presence of God in Christ for the spiritual rescue of His people. According to this, Matthew records not a literal fulfilment, but the antitype of the prophetic events in the days of Isaiah.

Comprehensive View. (4) It is certainly more in harmony with all of the facts suggested both in Isaiah and in Matthew to hold that the spirit of Jehovah

*It is clear, however, that Jehovah was to be with Judah if Ahaz would accept the divine advice; and shall we not reasonably understand that even if Ahaz should remain stubborn, Jehovah would preserve the nation, though He might punish the unfaithful kingdom with desolation? Note that, as argued below, the evident relation of this passage to 8:8 and 9:6, 7 shows that Jehovah, through fortune or misfortune, was to be with Judah.

framed the prophecy for Isaiah, whether the prophet understood it or not, so as to present to Ahaz the required sign and proof that Isaiah's message was of God, and yet so as to include the Messiah and the presence of God with men in the incarnated Savior. In this view a child Immanuel was well known to Ahaz, and the periods of his life mark the events which Isaiah foretold to the king; and yet this child was really only a pledge of the real Immanuel of whom the Spirit spoke, and to whom Isaiah again alludes when he speaks of an army "the stretching out of whose wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel" (8:8).^{*} The name signifies that Jehovah is with His people, and the great burden of Messianic thought is that God will continue with His people. The Immanuel in the days of Ahaz, who was by name a pledge and monument of Jehovah's preservation of Judah when that nation might have been obliterated by her enemies, only made manifest the great truth which the coming of the Messiah should fully establish in fulfilment of the main idea of this prophecy, namely, that God is with us.

Emphasis on the Child. If Isaiah understood that he spoke of the Messiah, he must have expected him to appear immediately; then in subsequent predictions he expected him later, and so on to the end of his ministry. Whether he understood that a Messiah should rise up in the distant future or not, if the Spirit within him was prompting a Messianic utterance in this passage, the child Immanuel that was born in the days of Ahaz must have been a pledge of divine help for the race, and have remained such a pledge till the Messiah arrived. It is probable, in any case, that neither in Isaiah nor in Matthew was the emphasis laid on the virgin mother so much as upon the child Immanuel. Certainly in Isaiah the mother bears little re-

^{*}This apostrophe to Immanuel implies that Isaiah understood that he should be more than an ordinary child with an extraordinary name; and if we connect it with the promise of the child to be named "Wonderful Counsellor" (Isa. 9:6, 7), there remains little room for a doubt that the prophet expected the Messiah in the child to be born in the days of Ahaz. The three predictions in chapters vii, viii, and ix are linked together, the first and third predict the birth of a child, and the first and second call the name Immanuel. The Messianic character of the third can hardly be questioned, and the immediate time-limit of the first is evident; yet there is no necessary inconsistency in the

lation to the historical situation at the time or to the events that were to follow; and in Matthew but little is said of the mother, while the whole book is devoted to the life and work of the child. The virginity of the mother was not at all necessary to secure a clear and convincing sign to Ahaz, nor did it have any significance relating to the national events that were about to occur in his day. It was the child, bearing the name Immanuel, that signified the presence of God with the people then; and although Spirit-begotten and virgin-born, it is the child Immanuel rather than the mother that makes manifest the presence of God with men in the Messianic age. He is the one emphatic object of prophecy. All others are incidental and comparatively unimportant.

8. *The Wonderful Counsellor. Isa. ix. 1-7.*

Occasion.

Just before the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pilezer captured Galilee in 734 B. C. (2 Kings 15:29), deep gloom fell over Northern Israel. The Assyrians were victorious in Syria, and greatly displeased with the rebellion of Israel, which now had no sufficient army to repel the invader. In the midst of this distress and darkness Isaiah promises light to the very districts in which the shadow is deepest. He predicts that whereas the nation is about to be diminished, it shall afterwards be multiplied; that in contrast with its sorrows, it shall rejoice as men gathering a rich harvest, or as soldiers dividing spoil; and instead of the yoke of tyranny and the rod of oppression, their deliverance and peace shall be so marked that it will be as if all the weapons of war and military uniforms should be burned up because no longer needed. This happy change is based upon Isaiah's Messianic forecast, which he expresses as follows:

predictions. The Messianic Immanuel was divinely assured; and the prophet no doubt vainly expected him in the sign of Ahaz, and hence (in 8:8) the solemn "O Immanuel." The prophet's misapprehension was neither a fault nor a false prophecy, but a limitation (see I. Peter 1:10-12). Even the limitation was not serious; for the child under Ahaz signified the presence of God with Judah, just as the Messiah demonstrates His presence with the world. The prophet rightly understood the vital truth, God is with us.

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this.”

**Form of the
Prophecy.**

The form of this prophecy may be due to an implied contrast between the ruler who is about to arise in Israel and the Assyrian leader who has brought so much distress. Tiglath-Pilezer was a remarkable counsellor, since his counsels in war rarely failed; he was a mighty one, as had been proved by his success; he was a master of booty (the Hebrew will admit of either translation, Everlasting Father or Father of booty); and he was a prince of war. The ruler whose coming Isaiah foretells will be far more wonderful in counsel, will have the might of God, will be the father of eternity, and will be pre-eminently a prince of peace. In every respect he will be superior to the Assyrian king and an object of admiration instead of dread.

**Value of
the Prophecy.**

It need hardly be said that such a person did not appear in that age; but this prediction so clearly pointed to some future personage as that it had much to do with planting the hope in the Hebrew mind that sometime God would raise up for His people a great deliverer. Isaiah's contemporaries could hardly expect a child yet unborn to grow up to manhood in time to meet the present oppressor; yet they must have thought of a leader who sooner or later would be able, not only to rescue from Assyrian domination, but to save his people from other oppressions.* They must have discovered from the language of Isaiah that he did not refer to any ordinary human ruler. The titles that he was to wear are extraordinary and divine: and especially it could not be true

*It is no unwarranted deception if a prophet puts his prediction of a far-off event in a form that gives courage and comfort to his own generation. He sets no date, and seeks no advantage of his hearer; but rather inspires an expectation that strengthens his countrymen for crises through which a despairing nation could never pass. Indeed, the Hebrew prophet alone has the distinction of unintentionally holding his people to a distant goal, and thereby saving them first from hopelessness, and then from extinction.

of any strictly human ruler that "of the increase of his government and of peace there should be no end." This clearly affirms that he is to have perpetual dominion and unlimited authority. Even more than this, he is to have David's throne and kingdom, and by his righteousness to establish the royal power of David from the date of his advent to the end of time. This cannot mean that he should become the leader of a dynasty of kings, or that he should secure the favor of God upon the Davidic dynasty so that it should never be discontinued, for either of these things David had already himself accomplished. The meaning can be only that this coming Ruler will himself enjoy an everlasting reign. Such predictions are applicable only to the Messiah as revealed to us in the New Testament. He became a king, was a descendant of David, had divine power, secured a perpetual dominion, and in righteousness established the Davidic throne forever.

**Connection
with
Immanuel.**

It seems almost certain that this personage is the same as the Immanuel of Isaiah 8:8, who is addressed as the one to whom the Holy Land belongs. If this be true, there would seem also to be some connection with the prophecy concerning the virgin's son (7:14). These connections suggest that the prophecy given to Ahaz had much more than a temporal significance; and that the Spirit by whose enlightenment the prophet utters this prediction concerning the future ruler must have intended the words spoken to Ahaz to be more than a faint hint of the Messianic deliverer. With all these passages before us it is certainly not difficult to find traces of the divine purpose which has been fulfilled in Christ.

9. *The Shoot of the Stock of Jesse. Isa. xi.*

The Text.

"And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit: and the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah; and his delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the

breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins."

**Appropriate
to the Time.**

This was probably written about the year 701 B. C., just before the invasion of Judah by the Assyrian king, Sennacherib. Isaiah foretells the coming of the Assyrians in the previous chapter, but says that however lofty they may be, they shall be brought low: though they may be like the boughs of the cedar forests in Lebanon, they shall be lopped off and hewn down, never to sprout up again. On the other hand, although the house of Jesse shall fall when Judah shall be carried into captivity, yet a remnant of the royal family shall remain like the stump of an oak tree that has been felled.* It is out of this remaining part of Jesse's family that one shall rise like a shoot from a stump, and as a fruitful branch shall accomplish much in the name of Jehovah. The coming of the Assyrians will be a time of despair, but the Assyrians are to be hopelessly overthrown. Judah, however, although undergoing great loss, shall recover, and under the leadership of a future descendant of Jesse shall walk in the fear and service of Jehovah.

**Character of
the Shoot.**

The character and power of this future leader as indicated by the prophet mark him as an extraordinary person. The Spirit of Jehovah will rest upon him, he shall be very wise and intelligent, he shall be shrewd in counsel and strong in execution, he shall delight to reverence Jehovah, he shall judge with impartiality, shall vindicate the poor and humble in their pleas for justice, and shall by the word of his authority overthrow the wicked. These seven points of perfection were not united in any descendant of Jesse from the days of Isaiah to the coming of the Messiah: and in no other than the Messiah has this combination appeared. Moreover, the character well corresponds to the name Immanuel already introduced by this prophet: and it can hardly be questioned that

*The present passage must be understood in keeping with 6:13, where the oak tree is the representative of the "holy seed," and with 10:33, 34, where the cedars of Lebanon are the emblem of the Assyrians. The oak when felled, sprouts up again; but the cedar when cut down, has no recovery. So the house of David may be deprived of its throne, but it will regain its power; but the Assyrians once overthrown will pass to an endless oblivion.

in this passage the writer refers to the same person as he whom he has already called a Wonderful Counsellor.

**The Reign
of Peace.**

The reign of this divine ruler will partake of his own extraordinary character, and is thus described by the prophet:

“And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
And the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together;
And a little child shall lead them.
And the cow and the bear shall feed;
Their young ones shall lie down together;
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp,
And the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den.
They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain;
For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah,
As the waters cover the sea.”

This is clearly an allegorical picture of a time of peace among men. Even though the prophet may intend to present a poetical review of a more peaceful state of nature, he must mean that there will come to pass this better condition of the world under the highest form of human civilization. It is not improbable that Isaiah poetically views the natural world as partaking of the violent and cruel character of man in his days, and foresees the time when nature shall be conformed to a gentler and more peaceful spirit in humanity. This better day is to come under the reign of that ruler who is to be influenced by the Spirit of Jehovah. The correctness of his foresight is beginning to be apparent in our own day; for as Christian civilization advances cruelty is repressed, a spirit of love and mercy cultivated, and gradually even the animal creation ceases to be feared, and its rapacious nature is subdued. It is not impossible, however, as some interpret this passage, that these several animals were designed by the author to represent men of a corresponding disposition, and that the influence of the Messianic Ruler shall so change the hearts of the most savage persons that they shall be prepared to mingle harmoniously with the most innocent and defenceless of their fellowmen. The Christian missionary today constantly beholds this change coming about.

**Messiah's
Glory.**

Another feature of this descendant of Jesse appears in v. 10, in which the prophet says:

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that as for the root of Jesse, that standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto him shall the nations seek; and his resting-place shall be glorious.”

This prediction contemplates the Messiah as a conspicuous object standing in full view of the nations of the earth, and so awakening their attention as to cause them to search into the meaning of his presence. This foretells a universal interest in the Messiah and promises that the nations shall earnestly desire to understand the secret of his power. It further promises that he shall attain to a glorious position. Thus again, as in former periods of the prophecy, the universality and glory of the Messianic king are announced.

**Return of
Captives.**

Apparently in connection with this prophecy is given also a promise of a return of a remnant of Jehovah's people from various nations among whom they are about to be scattered. This is expressed as follows:

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord will set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, that shall remain, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he will set up an ensign for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and they that vex Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.”

Judah's captivity is here regarded as equally certain with that of Israel; but while many will be destroyed, a faithful remnant shall return to their former country. The “second time” that Jehovah will set His hand to recover His people, refers to the deliverance from Egypt in the days of Moses as the first time (cf. v. 16). The return here described implies that Israel and Judah that have long been divided shall be reunited in peace. By means of this union they are also to overcome their enemies round about them. This is but a repetition of the prophecy of Hosea 1:11, and shows the attitude of the prophets toward the division of the Hebrew people.

**Messianic
Features.**

The Messianic features of this chapter may be noted as follows: (1) A person from the family of Jesse shall arise as a "Shoot out of his stock," who shall be an ideal character among men and perform an ideal work. Since the Messiah is the only historic personage that approaches this ideal, and since he fulfils it perfectly, it is reasonable to interpret the prediction as directly descriptive of him. (2) An ideal government shall be instituted in the earth under a perfectly just judge, who is also identical with the "Shoot" of Jesse. (3) An ideal state of the world's peace is here predicted, which shall be so notable that even the wild animals of the earth shall seem to enter into harmony with it. (4) The knowledge of Jehovah shall abound in the earth as the waters fill the sea. This cannot relate to anything connected with the Exile or a return from captivity; neither can it find any fulfilment before the opening of the Christian era. A fulfilment is in prospect only by the promulgation of the gospel of Christ throughout the world. (5) This offspring of the house of David shall be made conspicuous among men, so that he shall attract the interest of all nations, and they shall seek to come unto him. This yearning after him shall result in his attainment of great glory. (6) After the dispersion of Judah among the nations, a remnant shall be gathered together, and be reunited with Ephraim in a bond of perpetual peace.

10. *The Turning of the Nations to Jehovah.*

Conversion of Ethiopians. "In that time shall a present be brought unto Jehovah of hosts from a people tall and smooth, even from a people terrible from their beginning onward, a nation that meteth out and treadeth down, whose land the rivers divide, to the place of the name of Jehovah of hosts, the mount of Zion." Isa. xviii. 7.

These words are uttered concerning the people of Ethiopia,*

*The Ethiopia of that day was probably not farther removed from Egypt than our modern Soudan, and embraced the region extending from the first cataract of the Nile southward presumably not beyond Khartoum. Cf. Ezek. 29:10. The people of that land from the days of Herodotus even to this time, have been notably tall and handsome. More than once (2 Chr. 12:3; 14:9-13) the Israelites had met these "terrible" men in battle; and they knew how they were accustomed to mete out with a measuring line the lands of the conquered and to trod down their antagonists in war.

who are named and similarly described in vv. 1, 2. In figurative terms it is here affirmed that they shall become tributary to Jehovah's government. In the nature of the divine government, tribute can be brought to Jehovah only by persons who acknowledge Him as God, and who desire to serve Him. This implies a religious conversion, which could not take place to any considerable extent under Jewish influence before the Messianic advent.

**Egypt and
Assyria.**

"In that day there shall be an altar to Jehovah in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to Jehovah. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto Jehovah because of oppressors, and he will send them a savior, and a defender, and he will deliver them. And Jehovah shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know Jehovah in that day; yea, they shall worship with sacrifice and oblation, and shall vow a vow unto Jehovah, and shall perform it. And Jehovah will smite Egypt, smiting and healing; and they shall return unto Jehovah, and he will be entreated of them, and will heal them. In that day there shall be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria; and the Egyptians shall worship with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth; for that Jehovah of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance." Isa. xix. 19-25.

Two other great nations are here represented as turning to Jehovah, and as being received and blessed by Him. An altar and a pillar are to be built unto Jehovah in Egypt, which evidently is designed to express a willing worship of Jehovah by this nation. In response to this and because of their former oppressions, Jehovah will send to them a savior and deliverer. Taking into account the fact that the present picture of Egypt's future loyalty to Jehovah will include not merely an outward demonstration of altars and monuments, but also sacrifice, oblation, vows and the performance of vows, it is evident that a thorough religious revolution in favor of the service of Jehovah is contemplated. Such a revolution did not occur and could not occur by any influences that operated before the coming of Christ. The fact that prominent nations of Isaiah's day are chosen for these predictions of national conversion, suggests that these are named merely as samples of the nations of the world, and that we really have here prophecies that imply the conversion

of the race under Christian instruction. It is certain that at the time that this prediction was made the prophet did not behold influences sufficient to accomplish these things. This is true whether Isaiah or some other person may have been the author.

Friendly Relations. Connected with this turning to Jehovah by these nations, will be a corresponding change with respect to each other. The Egyptians and Assyrians, who have long been intensely hostile to each other, will enter into the freest and friendliest communications. Even their worship, which has always been radically different, will become the same, and the one nation will mingle with the other in divine service. Not only so, but these two will form a friendly association with Israel, so that Jehovah's blessings will be equally distributed among the three, each of whom the Lord will call His own. Assyria, however, fell about 606 B. C., never to rise again; and up to that time no such change as is here described took place. While it is true that under Alexander the Great all these countries were brought under one dominion, it is not true that the nation of Assyria in any proper sense had a part. It seems reasonable to understand only that these nations represent the nations of the earth that shall exist at the time when the unifying influence of Christianity shall bring them to fraternal relations and to the service of the same God.*

Value of these Prophecies. The value of these prophecies may be seen not only in the high ideal which they place before the nations, but also in the long reach of vision into the blessing of universal service to Jehovah. (1) The prediction rising above the military spirit and custom of the nations in adjusting all differences at the point of the sword, presents a vision of universal peace. It is most remarkable that

*George Rawlinson in the Pulpit Commentary, holds that an initial stage in the fulfilment was reached from the days of Alexander to Christ by the location of the Hebrews in three great groups, the Palestian, the Egyptian and the Syro-Babylonian, and by the transmission of ecclesiastical regulations formed at Jerusalem to Alexandria and Babylon, and the return of collections from these places to Jerusalem. He deems the preaching of the gospel of Christ to the lands of Egypt, Libya, Parthia, Media, Elam and Mesopotamia as "as the more complete fulfilment."

a prophet unaccustomed to international amity, and especially in a period of military commotion and struggle for national supremacy, should entertain and announce a prospect of commercial and religious peace and fellowship among the nations. (2) It is very notable that the prophet should anticipate a time when such obstacles to national unity as a diversity of languages (v. 18), oppressions (v. 20), and ignorance of Jehovah (v. 21), should be removed. These barriers had never been absent since the nations were established, and there was no natural prospect in Isaiah's day that they would ever be dislodged. It would seem that only a supernatural foresight of the pacific influence of Christianity upon the nations could have prevailed upon the mind of the prophet to compose these predictions. (3) The blessing which shall come to the nations through Israel is to be broad, liberal, unsectional and universal. This is a most magnificent outlook for Israel and a most hopeful vision of the world's future. Although under Christian teaching modern nations have come into more friendly relations than in former times, men are hardly yet prepared to entertain so optimistic an outlook; and it is much more surprising that Isaiah should have made this announcement in the midst of the gloom of his unpromising period. Nevertheless, he touched the key that must unlock the hidden blessing of these nations when he based the whole prediction upon the universal acceptance of Jehovah as God. No other event could work so great a revolution; and this could not occur except through the proclamation of the gospel of the Messiah.

11. *The Corner-stone. Isa. xxviii. 14-18; Psalm cxviii. 22, 23.*

**Historical
Setting.**

The historical setting of Isaiah's prophecy concerning the Corner-stone is manifest from the earlier verses of this chapter. It was a time when Northern Israel, here called Ephraim, was reeling with dissipation and violence, and fast verging upon that fate which befell the nation about 722 B. C. Isaiah condemns the drunkenness of the leaders of Ephraim, and predicts that the crown of their pride shall be trodden under foot, that their

beauty of which they boasted was but a fading flower or a first-ripe fig quickly to be swallowed up. Turning to the men of Judah, he reproaches them in similar terms, pointing to the fact that priest and prophet together were staggering with strong drink and erring both in prophecy and in judgment. But they reproached him with annoying them again and again with Jehovah's messages, "precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little;"—babble, babble, babble. But Isaiah responds that Jehovah will hereafter deliver His babble, babble, by means of a hostile army, "by men of strange lips and with another tongue;" and then they shall "fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken."

Rulers Warned. . It is under these circumstances that the following is uttered:

"Wherefore hear the word of Jehovah, ye scoffers, that rule this people that is in Jerusalem: Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us; for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: therefore saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone of sure foundation: he that believeth shall not be in haste. And I will make justice the line, and righteousness the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place. And your covenant with death shall be annulled, and your agreement with Sheol shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it."

In very strong terms he here pictures the recklessness of the people of Judah. Their "covenant with death" was simply their disbelief that death would overtake them as a punishment for their sins;* hence their disregard of the numerous warnings from Jehovah sent through His prophet. Isaiah charges them with having made lies their refuge, and with expecting that falsehood would be a protection against an overflowing calamity.

*It may hardly be doubted that an allusion is made by the word "covenant" to a treasonable complicity with Egypt against the Assyrians. Samaria had been for years subject to Assyria; but, misled by the falsehoods of Egyptian ambassadors, had become a traitor to Assyria, and at the moment of this prophecy was suffering from an Assyrian invasion that a little later resulted in the fall of the capital and the exile of Northern Israel.

The "Stone."

In contrast with the vain security that the men of Judah had found in the prevarications of their false prophets, Isaiah announces that Jehovah will lay in Zion, a foundation stone, tried, precious and safe, upon which men may stand without fear or danger. This corner-stone can hardly refer to the law of Moses since that was not laid in Zion, but at Sinai. Neither can it refer to the advices of Jehovah to the people of Judah uttered from time to time by the prophets, for many of these were announced in the Northern kingdom; and many had already been laid down before this promise was given. Since it refers to something beside the law and the prophecies, and yet something very important, very permanent, and requiring faith among the people to protect them from the divine judgment, it can hardly be anything else than the personal Messiah already announced by Isaiah.* This interpretation is precisely that given by the Savior and the apostles Paul and Peter (Matt. 21:42; Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:3-8).

A Similar Prophecy.

A similar prophecy in slightly different language is found in Psalm 118:22, 23: "The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner. This is Jehovah's building; it is marvelous in our eyes." In this Psalm the author relates his experience in which he was distressed by the heathen, but from whom Jehovah delivered him. Upon this occasion he announces his deep confidence in God, who has become his salvation. Jehovah is there-

*"The foundation stone represents the one element in human history which is indestructible, viz., the purpose of God, and that purpose as historically realized in the relation which He has established between Himself and the people of Israel." Prof. Skinner, Camb. Bible for Schools and Colleges.

Piercing the indefiniteness of this remark, we may discern the great truth, that the one abiding element of human history is the purpose of God. But has Isaiah no distinct word as to what this purpose of God is? Prof. Skinner understands that this passage is Isaiah's own writing; and we may therefore refer to Isaiah's clear declarations of the divine purpose in 9:6, 7; 11:1-10 and elsewhere. It is to bring into the world a Governor of whose dominion and peace there shall be no end. One who shall establish and uphold the kingdom of David with justice and righteousness. If the stone in this prediction represents the divine purpose, it is unquestionably Messianic. Indeed the purpose of God taken in its broad sense must include the Messiah and his kingdom; for through him flow all the streams of divine mercy and benevolence.

fore as a stone of greatest importance rejected by the heathen as builders. When Jesus was rebuking the Jews for rejecting himself, he reminds them that they were doing precisely what had been done in the days of the psalmist. They were setting at nought the head of the new kingdom which they hoped to see established, just as builders might reject the stone that belongs at the head of the corner. Likewise, Paul referring to the building of the Church, partly of Jewish and partly of Gentile material, declares that "Christ Jesus himself is the chief corner-stone," and that in him Jews and Gentiles are united as the two walls of a building are joined in a corner-stone. So also Peter in describing the Church as a spiritual house quotes both Isaiah and the psalmist, and applies their words to Christ as the foundation-stone of the building, precious to those who believe on him, but a stone of stumbling for such as disbelieve. It is certainly true that Christ occupies precisely this position in that spiritual structure which through long ages God had fully purposed to erect. If the utterances by Isaiah and the psalmist were truly prophetic, there can be at least but a feeble reason for our understanding them to mean by the corner-stone any other than the Messiah. Certainly no other so well suits the title, and concerning no other is it reasonable that Jehovah should have thus spoken.

12. *Zion and Her King. Isa. xxxiii. 13-24.*

Circumstances.

In the earlier part of this chapter the prophet graphically describes the scenes of a destructive invasion by some great enemy, who has already laid desolate the land of Judah, and whose valiant warriors are crying outside the walls of Jerusalem for the city to surrender. The ambassadors of Judah weep, and mourning fills all the land. No other time in the life of Isaiah so perfectly furnished such conditions as the time of Sennacherib's invasion in 701 B. C. (2 Kings 18:13-19:37). In the midst of these dreadful events, Isaiah was the calm counsellor of the king, because he trusted confidently in Jehovah for deliverance (Isa. 37:33-35). Many of the king's courtiers had little faith in Isaiah's advice, and hence were in great consternation. Isaiah held that the right-

eous would not be overthrown, but would dwell in safety under divine protection. Accordingly he cheers his countrymen by the prospect of the future greatness and security of Zion and the beauty of her king. He bases this prediction on the fact that Jehovah is judge, lawgiver and king, and that He will save His people.

The Message. He frames his prophecy in the following words:

“Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and, ye that are near, acknowledge my might. The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling hath seized the godless ones: Who among us can dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us, can dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from taking a bribe, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from looking upon evil: He shall dwell on high; his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks; his bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.

Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold a land that reacheth afar. Thy heart shall muse on the terror: Where is he that counted, where is he that weighed the tribute? Where is he that counted the towers? Thou shalt not see the fierce people, a people of a deep speech that thou canst not comprehend, of a strange tongue that thou canst not understand. Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tent that shall not be removed, the stakes whereof shall never be plucked up, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there Jehovah will be with us in majesty, a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. For Jehovah is our judge, Jehovah is our lawgiver, Jehovah is our king; he will save us. Thy tacklings are loosed; they could not strengthen the foot of their mast, they could not spread the sail; then was the prey of a great spoil divided; the lame took the prey. And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.”

The Ideal Citizen.

The important features of this prophecy deserve special attention. (1) The prophet eloquently describes the citizen who shall be able to abide through all dangers. It is he that walks and speaks uprightly, that refuses bribes, that abhors bloodshed, and refuses to countenance evil. Such a person shall be secure as one that dwells on a high place where the rocky precipice is his defence. To him supplies of bread and of water shall be given unfailingly. Clearly Isaiah implies that Jehovah will protect

such a citizen; and that if the land of Judah had been peopled with persons of this class, the desolations and slaughter that were then present would not have taken place. This part of the prophecy exhibits a general truth, and is not specifically Messianic.

(2) He foretells "the king in his beauty." Many modern scholars insist that this is strictly Messianic, while others are less certain. It is hardly credible that Isaiah should have said this concerning the half-hearted Hezekiah who was then on the throne. Undoubtedly he foresees some future king whose character shall well become the glory of the future Zion described in the following verses. More than this, the description of the city is ideal, and not such as naturally Jerusalem could ever become; and from this it is reasonable to infer that "the king in his beauty" is also ideal, and hence could not be realized by any merely human king. Only the divine Ruler could fulfil such a prediction; and if this be true, there remains little question of the Messianic character of the prophecy.

The Land. (3) He next predicts a far-stretching land, which he does not otherwise describe, but the close connection of this statement with that concerning the "king" implies that the ideal king will reign over an ideal country. Whether the territory of this dominion is here conceived to be universal or not, as it has been in some former predictions, the author does not definitely affirm.

Invaders. (4) Hostile invaders, such as those upon whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem were daily looking with dread, who presented an appearance of fierceness, and whose speech they were not able to understand, are not to be seen in that future ideal time. This seems to reaffirm a period of universal peace, which has been announced by Isaiah in chapter xi.

Jerusalem. (5) Jerusalem of the future shall be like an immovable tent, a quiet and peaceful habitation. There Jehovah will dwell in majesty. Like ancient Thebes with the Nile waters flowing all around it, Jerusalem

shall be compassed with broad rivers;* but in them no war-vessel or sloop laden with the troops of an enemy will sail. Here by an apostrophe Isaiah turns and addresses the Assyrians as if they might hope to launch their war-ships against the city, and says, "Thy tacklings have broken loose; they (thy sailors) could not strengthen the foot of thy mast, they could not spread the sail." Turning again to his people, Isaiah adds, "Then was the prey of a great spoil divided; even the lame took the prey." All this will come to pass because Jehovah is judge, lawgiver, king and savior. Clearly this is ideal, since Jerusalem could not naturally be surrounded by waters, and naval scenes before her walls would be impossible. This is but a poetic picture of what the prophet sees that Jehovah will do for His people in coming times; but any great things that Jehovah will thus do comparable with this description must be Messianic.

**Sins
Forgiven.**

(6) The prediction closes with the announcement that the "people that dwell therein shall be forgiven of their iniquity." Isaiah urges that it is on account of the sins of Judah that desolations are permitted by Jehovah in their land; but that in the day when ideal conditions shall prevail iniquity shall not bring judgments upon the people; but their sins shall be forgiven, and this will be a condition of citizenship. This accords well with the relation that each person sustains toward God in the Christian institution.

**Isaiah's
Custom.**

This prophecy is another example of Isaiah's custom to select an occasion of great distress and deep despair to utter his most hopeful and encouraging predictions. In this way he not only took occasion to present valuable Messianic announcements at a time when they would be most gladly heard and receive greatest attention, but also when they would serve to strengthen faith, encourage loyalty and inspire greater righteousness among the chosen people. In this way he accomplished many objects at the same time.

*Some interpreters have regarded the words "a place of broad rivers and streams" as in apposition with "Jehovah," which signifies that He is a place of broad rivers and streams in which no galleys pass. Such a locative conception of Jehovah is rare and strained, and it does not comport with His official character in the next sentence.

Even to the modern reader there is something attractive in beholding the brightest prophetic pictures set in the frame-work of Israel's most gloomy and foreboding experiences.

13. *God in His City. Psalms xvi and xlviii.*

“Sons of
Korah.”

The titles to these Psalms assign them to the “Sons of Korah,” which means certain descendants of Korah, who was the grandson of Kohath the son of Levi. Korah perished in the rebellion against Moses and Aaron (Num. xvi); but his sons were not involved in his fall (Num. 26:11). The family was famous in the time of David (1 Chr. 12:6), and remained so until after the Exile (1 Chr. 9:17, 19; Neh. 11:19). To members of this family, by name unknown to us, Psalms 42-49, 84, 85, 87, 88 are ascribed; but the exact dates of some of these Psalms cannot be determined.

Dates.

Absolute agreement regarding the date of these two Psalms has not been reached by scholars; but the following views have been presented: (1) Since the Psalms seem to refer to some great deliverance from national enemies, the time of Jehoshaphat is sometimes mentioned, because in his day a large army composed of allied enemies invaded Judah, and were overthrown by divine help. 2 Chr. 20: 20-27. (2) Many others hold that the Psalms were written about the time that Isaiah xxxiii. was composed. The chief reason for this date is the similarity of thought of the psalms with this chapter in Isaiah. As Isaiah speaks of the rivers and streams about the city (v. 21), so the Psalmist says, “There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God” (46: 4); as Isaiah speaks of Jehovah lifting himself up and being exalted (v. 10), so the Psalmist gives a double statement concerning divine exaltation (46: 10); and as Isaiah speaks of those that counted the towers of Jerusalem (v. 18), so the Psalmist bids his readers to number the towers of the city, to note her bulwarks, and consider her palaces (48:12, 13). Other less striking examples could be cited, and the general trend of the prophecy is remarkably similar. While the date may not be regarded as settled decisively, the period of Isaiah is as well suited as any in which to assume that the Messianic features of these Psalms were uttered.

**Presence of
Jehovah.**

The leading Messianic ideas presented in these two Psalms are: (1) The presence of Jehovah is with his people working out their deliverance. In Psalm xlv. it is said:

"God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.

* * * * *

There is a river the streams whereof make glad the city of God.
The holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.
God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved:
God will help her, and that right early.
The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved:
He uttered his voice, the earth melted.
Jehovah of hosts is with us;
The God of Jacob is our refuge."

In like manner the remainder of this Psalm and much of Ps. xlviii. describe the presence of Jehovah in Zion for her help. This conception is in keeping with the sentiment announced in Isa. 33:17, 21, 22; and signifies that the future of the Jewish people is understood by the prophetic poets to be in the hands of Jehovah, and that He has purposes to be accomplished in this people that shall distinguish them from all others. These purposes require the divine presence in the city for their accomplishment.

**Peace and
Exaltation.**

(2) One of Jehovah's purposes is to secure peace throughout the world. Hence the writers say, "He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth" (Ps. 46: 9). This corresponds to the prophecy of Isaiah xi, in which even the beasts of the field are to partake with men in a disposition of amity. (3) The city of Zion will be greatly exalted, "Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north the city of the great King." Ps. 48:2. This exaltation is due to the presence of Jehovah, and the city is distinctly called "The City of the Great King." It is certain that the most remarkable manifestations of God's presence in the city of Jerusalem was made in the person of the Messiah; and while the prophet does not distinctly foresee this event, he rightly discerns the principle of the divine intention to be fulfilled in Christ. This is not to say, however,

that at no time before the coming of Christ was Jehovah with the city; for He was with His people during all their history, whether in blessing or in punishments.

The Fame of Jehovah. (4) The fame of Jehovah is to be spread abroad throughout the earth. Kings that assemble in hostility shall pass away with great amazement and haste (48:4, 5); Jehovah is to be exalted among the nations, and his praise shall reach the ends of the earth (46:10; 48:10). Whatever may be said of the fame which Jehovah secured for Himself before the coming of Christ, it is certain that He was never so widely known and His praise so universally spoken as in modern times through the spread of the gospel of His grace.

Messianic Character. If these utterances may not be said to be directly and strictly Messianic, they are, at least, most remarkable expressions of truths of a very vital character which have their highest exhibition in the course of Messianic history. It is to be remembered that the prophet's work was not to write history in advance, but to delineate and impress the divine purpose upon the minds of his countrymen, no matter whether that purpose should be traced by events immediate or more remote. The purpose might be very definitely set in a prediction concerning a special person or event, or it might have the more general form of a principle to be maintained or even a general result to be secured. If the principle or result attain a culmination in the Messianic age as it could not in any age preceding, the prophecy that contained it has a pronounced Messianic value.

14. *The Ruler from Bethlehem. Micah v. 1-5.*

The Prophet. The opening words of this book announce that "the word of Jehovah came to Micah the Morashtite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah," which is also confirmed by the statement in Jer. 26:18, that "Micah the Morashtite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah." Jeremiah says that "he spake to all the people of Judah;" but Micah says that his prophecy was "concerning

Samaria and Jerusalem." Jeremiah speaks of one particular utterance, while Micah refers to the prophetic work of the whole book or his whole life.

Conditions. The conditions of Judah when this prophecy was composed were very serious; for it was a time of lamentation when "her wounds were incurable" (1:8, 9), and when every kind of wickedness prevailed among the people (2:1-5). The rulers of the people hated the good and loved the evil, they oppressed the people and despised Jehovah (3:1-4). Even the prophets of the times led the people astray, and sought undeserved rewards (3:5-7). Micah was foretelling that Judah should go forth out of the city and be brought to Babylon, and thence redeemed by Jehovah from her enemies (4:10). The time was probably just before the Assyrian invasion under Sennacherib, 701 B. C.

The Prediction. "Now shalt thou gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us; they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek. But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting. Therefore will he give them up, until a time that she who travaileth hath brought forth: then the residue of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. And he shall stand, and shall feed his flock in the strength of Jehovah, in the majesty of the name of Jehovah his God: and they shall abide; for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. And this man shall be our peace." 5:1-5.

Ephrathah. The name Ephrathah, meaning fruitfulness, was added to the name Bethlehem to distinguish this town from another Bethlehem belonging to the tribe of Zebulun. It is not probable that the meaning of the name has any significance related to this prophecy. [The town was called "little" (v. 2), because of its size, which is indicated by the fact that the place is not listed in Josh. 15:21, ff., nor in Neh. 11:25, ff., though it was built, or rebuilt, by Rehoboam (2 Chr. 11:6): but it never attained a large population. In quoting this passage, Matthew calls the town "not little" (Matt. 2:6), probably meaning "not the least" among the princely towns of Judah; for while it did not have great size, it should have a great reputation as the birth-place of a great ruler.]

**The Ruler's
Birth-place.**

This ruler as described in the prophecy is in some respects remarkable. (1) His greatness will be such as to give a reputation to the little village in which he was born. Bethlehem had already some distinction by being the home of Jesse the father of David; but it is to become much more famous, so that it will compare favorably with the greater towns of the land. However true this might have been if some noted earthly ruler had risen in Bethlehem, which in fact did not occur after this prophecy was spoken, it is certain that no city in the world is more famous as a birth-place than this village of Bethlehem on account of the nativity of Christ.

**His "Goings
Forth."**

(2) His "goings forth are from of old, from everlasting," and this cannot mean that the coming ruler was to have merely an ancient pedigree, although the list of David's ancestors was very long. Far-reaching pedigrees were kept in nearly all the Jewish families, and after the Exile these lists of ancestry were regarded as very valuable (Neh. 7:64). But the fact that long pedigrees were common would render that accident of the ruler's character too unimportant for so serious mention as this passage implies. On the other hand, there is a divine pedigree of far greater significance. The purpose of Jehovah to raise up this ruler was very old,* for it had been revealed from the days of Abraham on, and it is certain that Micah had regard for such an antiquity of divine promises, since he closes his book with the words, "Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the lovingkindness to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old." The apostle John recognized the antiquity of the Christ when he said, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." Jn. 1:1. Jesus also regarded it worth say-

*Cheyne suggests the translation "origins" instead of "goings forth;" that the plural signifies excellence, as "dominions for dominion" (Ps. 114:2); and that the prophecy points back to the "pre-existence of the Messiah in the eternal purposes of God, or, which is more obvious and perfectly suited to the context, to his descent from the ancient Davidic family." Cambridge Bible, Micah. It is to be noted that the double expression of antiquity, "from of old" and "from everlasting," is rather too strong for a descent merely from David.

ing, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was born I am." Jn. 8:58. Such remarkable correspondence between the prophecy by Micah and the language of Jesus could hardly be accidental, especially in view of the fact that Jesus as the greatest of all rulers had this antiquity as one of the most conspicuous features of his official rank.

**His Majestic
Office.**

(3) He "shall feed his flock in the strength of Jehovah, in the majesty of the name of Jehovah his God." We may not forget that

David, the prototype of this ruler, was from Bethlehem, and was a shepherd. The coming ruler, like many others, might be called a shepherd, because he was the leader of his people; but the strength of Jehovah and the divine majesty in which this ruler is to lead his flock mark him as lifted far above any other kings or princes. No other person so perfectly realized the dignity of this description as did the Messiah; and it would be a most remarkable thing if the prophet should have delivered a divine message of this character concerning any other when the divine mind had already purposed the coming of Christ. There would indeed have been no immediate purpose accomplished by speaking thus of another which could not be accomplished by using this language with direct reference to the Messiah.

**His
World-wide
Distinction.**

(4) "Now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth." This clearly predicts universal fame for this ruler; but it does not specify the grounds on which his reputation shall stand.

There was little natural prospect in Micah's day that any ruler of the little province of Judah should become famous throughout the world; and hence this statement, in keeping with those that have gone before, indicates a superhuman foresight of One who should not rule after the manner of men, but by divine power should secure universal recognition. In any case, it is true that no other person born in Bethlehem than the Messiah has attained this distinction. Throughout this whole passage there is a dignity and sublimity in the predictions that could not be matched in the life of any human ruler, and to which only the Man of Galilee was able to rise.

SUMMARY.

The time of Isaiah was a very fruitful period for Messianic prophecy, and several prophets unite to make the Messianic forecast more varied and complete. The following are perhaps the most important elements of this series of predictions:

1. A future king shall come to Zion, who shall be just and humble riding upon an ass, and who shall introduce a period of peace among the nations, and gain dominion over all the earth. Zech. 9:9, 10.

2. Jehovah proclaims Himself the God of Judah and Ephraim, that He will smite down their afflictions, that He will bring them redemption from the hands of their enemies, and that they shall walk in His name. Zech. 10:6, 10-12.

3. Jehovah's prophet and representative among His people is sold for thirty pieces of silver, and the money is delivered to a potter. Zech. 11:12, 13.

4. The holy seed is the stump of the tree of Judah, and it shall remain, although the tree itself shall be felled and destroyed. Isa. 6:13.

5. The house of Jehovah shall be greatly exalted, and be sought by the Gentiles; and from it shall go forth instruction to the nations that shall produce universal peace, so that wars shall be no more. Isa. 2:2-4.

6. The "branch of Jehovah" shall flourish, and therewith shall come a cleansing of sin together with a refuge and protection in Jehovah. Isa. 4:2-6.

7. A child shall be born that shall bear the memorial name God-with-us. Isa. 7:14.

8. A wonderful counsellor with divine titles shall rise, who shall assume the government of his people, who shall have the throne of David forever, and the increase of whose dominion and peace shall be perpetual. Isa. 9:6, 7.

9. A Shoot from the stock of Jesse shall appear, who shall be an ideal ruler and judge, who shall introduce a period of perfect peace, and under whom the knowledge of Jehovah shall fill the whole earth. Isa. 11.

10. Foreign nations shall learn the worship of Jehovah, shall

be led to international good-will and unity, and shall share with each other the choicest blessings of Jehovah. Isa. 19:18-25.

11. A precious and permanent corner-stone shall be laid by Jehovah as a basis of a personal life that shall not be uncertain nor disappointing. Isa. 28:16.

12. A king in his beauty shall appear ruling over a favored land, dwelling in a city surrounded by broad rivers in which no hostile fleet may sail, but in which a righteous citizenship shall be maintained, and sins shall be forgiven. Isa. 33 :17-24.

13. Jehovah will visit Zion, will secure peace throughout the world, and will exalt the holy city among the nations. Psalms 46 and 48.

14. A ruler shall come forth from the vallage of Bethlehem, who shall make the place of his nativity famous, whose career was purposed from of old, who shall perform for his people a work in the strength and majesty of Jehovah, and who shall be distinguished among all nations. Micah 5:2-4.

**Peculiarities
of the
Period.**

In previous periods special characteristics of Messianic prophecy have been noted, so that the predictions of each time have notably differed from those of other times. In the period of

Isaiah peculiar marks are somewhat less distinct and exclusive, but yet plainly discernible. As in former periods, the nature of the prophecy is dependent upon the condition of the Hebrew people at that time. The age in which Isaiah lived was one in which the fate or fortune of Judah hung as in a balance. At almost any time an invasion might be expected which might completely destroy her national character. Her own kings were for the most part unfaithful to Jehovah, and unworthy to win victories in His name. Defeat and exile were imminent. The characteristic prophecy of the time, however Messianic it may be, adapted itself to these conditions. The burden of the prophecy is a future ruler that shall be wise, just, humble, loyal to Jehovah, able to overcome enemies and to secure peace. Accordingly, his kingdom shall be very great, he shall introduce peace and friendship among the nations, shall extend the knowledge of Jehovah over the world, and shall increase in his dominion perpetually. It is in harmony with this that we have a prophecy about the king

coming to Zion riding upon an ass, about the one that is sold for thirty pieces of silver, about the Branch of Jehovah, about the child called Immanuel, about the wonderful counsellor, about the Shoot from the stock of Jesse, about the corner-stone, about the king in his beauty, and about the Ruler to be born in Bethlehem. Likewise we have those utterances which relate to the house of Jehovah exalted above the nations, to the government of whose dominion and peace there shall be no end, to the nations that shall join with Judah in the worship of Jehovah, to the city surrounded by peaceful waters, and to the citizenship that should discountenance evil and be forgiven of sins. It is not a little remarkable that the utterances of three or four different prophets should thus combine to form virtually one consistent announcement. It is no less remarkable that throughout all these predictions and descriptions of the coming king and his dominion the characteristics of the Messiah and of his reign should be accurately depicted.

CHAPTER VI.

PROPHECIES OF JEREMIAH'S TIME.

1. *Judgment and Restoration.* *Zeph. i. 1-4, 14-18; ii. 1-3;*
iii.

The Time.

The title to the book of Zephaniah announces that the word of Jehovah came to him "in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah." Josiah reigned about 640-609 B. C.; and he followed the long reign of the wicked Manasseh, and consequently when the moral condition of the country was most revolting. It is probable that this prophecy was published before the reformation in religion and morals which Josiah instituted, and hence the sad description of the sin and shame of the land. Nevertheless, we may not overlook the fact that much of Josiah's reformation consisted in external requirements, which may not have radically changed the character of the people; so that this prophecy might have arisen in the latter part of Josiah's reign.

Divine Threatenings.

The threatenings of Jehovah against the people may be seen by the following quotations:

"I will utterly consume all things from off the face of the ground, saith Jehovah. I will consume man and beast; I will consume the birds of the heavens, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumblingblocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the face of the ground, saith Jehovah. And I will stretch out my hand upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will cut off the remnant of Baal from this place, and the name of the Chemarim with the priests." 1:2-4.

"The great day of Jehovah is near, it is near and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of Jehovah; the mighty man crieth there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm, against the fortified cities, and against the high battlements. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against Jehovah." 1:14-17.

"Therefore wait ye for me, saith Jehovah, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." 3:8.

From these passages it is clear that on account of the sin of the people a national, if not an international, desolation is to be visited. In other verses (3:5-7) Zephaniah points to the devastation that had befallen other lands and cities on account of sin, in some instances until not even an inhabitant was left. He argues that if Jehovah has thus dealt justice to other offenders, He will not spare these people who have forsaken Him to follow false prophets.

**A Divine
Promise.**

A Hebrew prophet rarely closes up his message of threatening without adding also a promise. So Zephaniah closes his book by laying a brighter prospect before his people, as seen in the following language:

"For then will I turn to the peoples a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of Jehovah, to serve him with one consent. * * * Jehovah hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even Jehovah, is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not fear evil any more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not; O Zion, let not thy hands be slack. Jehovah thy God is in the midst of thee, a mighty one who will save; He will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee in singing. I will gather them that sorrow for the solemn assembly, who were of thee; to whom the burden upon her was a reproach. Behold, at that time I will deal with all them that afflict thee; and I will save that which is lame, and gather that which was driven away; and I will make them a praise and a name, whose shame hath been in all the earth. At that time will I bring you in, and at that time will I gather you; for I will make you a name and a praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I bring back your captivity before your eyes, saith Jehovah." 3:9, 15-20.

**Content of the
Promise.**

Jehovah here promises a restoration of the pure worship which Judah had neglected in the service of the gods of other lands. The "pure language" means a speech in which the names of other deities shall not be mentioned, but in which the name of Jehovah shall be spoken with reverence. The result will be a more perfect and useful life among the people that shall dwell in Jerusalem. To strengthen and secure this end, Jehovah Himself as the King

of Israel, will dwell in their midst. He will save them from their enemies, and rejoice over their prosperity. Those that sorrow, or are afflicted shall receive special attention and relief. The people shall become famous, and be highly honored among all the peoples of the earth. This will occur after they shall be carried into captivity, and it will serve as a reward to those who shall be found faithful to Jehovah at that time.

Messianic Predictions. The Messianic predictions of Zephaniah are not so conspicuous as those of some of the older prophets; nevertheless, a few important forecasts may be noted in this book. (1) He foresees the time when the people of heathen lands will put away their gods and accept Jehovah, not by coming to Jerusalem, but every man in his own place shall engage in this service. 2:11;* cf. Jn. 4:21. (2) He predicts also a judgment that shall affect all the kingdoms of men, but regards it mainly in the light of a visitation of God's indignation upon the heathen. 3:8. (3) He also anticipates a time when there shall be a complete spiritual restoration of Jehovah's own people, by their abandonment of all the false gods which they have worshiped, by their ceasing from the sins which they have hitherto practiced, by the influence of God in their midst and His continued assistance to their needy ones. 3:9-20.

Traces of Divine Influence. It is not possible that at the time when Zephaniah wrote there were within the natural horizon of the prophet forces apparent to bring about the things which he here foretells, although the need of such conditions must have been keenly felt. An empty need, however, does not justify a prediction that a remarkable blessing will come, much less does it warrant a definite description

*The prophecy in this verse is that Jehovah "will famish all the gods of the earth, and men shall worship Him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the nations." This means, not as Hitzig and Keil have thought, that Jehovah will famish other gods by destroying their worshippers, but, as the next line indicates, that Jehovah will win men from all lands to His service. The verse clearly lays emphasis also on the fact that it will not be necessary to come to Zion, or to become Israelites to serve Jehovah; but each man in his own country will adopt and serve Israel's God. This is being fulfilled today in almost every missionary station throughout the world.

of such a blessing. The Hebrew prophets were influenced, not by the perception of need alone, but also by a knowledge of Jehovah's purpose concerning His people. Zephaniah writes in perfect harmony with the predictions of the former prophets respecting a restoration and reformation after the Exile; and he goes as far as Isaiah in his description of the word of Jehovah with distant nations, although he does not imitate Isaiah's prophecies concerning peace and international friendliness. He describes more clearly, however, the immediate presence of Jehovah in the midst of His people and the divine watchcare over the weak and erring ones. He thus brings Jehovah somewhat nearer to the individual than Isaiah had done. In this he is only the more distinctly Messianic.

2. *The Gentiles Re-born in Zion. Psalm lxxxvii.*

Time of Composition. The date of the Psalm cannot be fixed with exactness nor with absolute certainty. The title announces that it is a "Psalm of the sons of Korah." It must have been written after the fall of Nineveh, 606 B. C.; for Babylon had risen to eminence in history (v. 4). Yet it could hardly have been composed after the Exile; for then the Babylonian period had passed, and Babylon would not be mentioned as an important existing nation.* It seems to have been also before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians about 599 B. C.; for the mention of "the gates of Zion" and "all the dwellings of Jacob" (v. 2) would hardly have been made if the city were already in ruins and its gates burned with

*It seems but fair to the opposite view to quote from Kirkpatrick, Cambridge Bible: "On the other hand, the parallels of thought and language with the later part of the book of Isaiah (especially 44:5; 60:1, ff.) and Zechariah, are not less striking; and the mention of Babylon rather than Assyria points to a date after that power had taken the place of Assyria as mistress of Western Asia. Egypt, the ancient enemy, and Babylon, the recent oppressor, are named as typical foes of God's people. It seems best then to suppose that the Psalm was written (like Ps. lxxxv) after the return from Babylon, to cheer the drooping spirits of those returned exiles who were in danger of being utterly disheartened by the disappointing contrast between the weakness and insignificance of their little community, and the grandeur and magnificence of the prophetic promises of the future glory and greatness of Zion."

fire (Neh. 1:3). The conclusion is that it was written between 606 and 599, which would be in the time of Jeremiah's ministry.

Zion Exalted. The Psalm exalts Zion as esteemed of Jehovah and as a place in which it will be an honor to any nation to be born. It is worded as follows:

"His foundation is in the holy mountains.
 Jehovah loveth the gates of Zion
 More than all the dwellings of Jacob.
 Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God.
 I will mention Rahab and Babylon as among them that know me:
 Behold, Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia:
 This one was born there.
 Yea, of Zion it shall be said, This one and that one was born in her;
 And the Most High himself will establish her.
 Jehovah will count, when he writeth up the peoples,
 This one was born there.
 They that sing as well as they that dance shall say,
 All my fountains are in thee."

The "glorious things" that are spoken of Zion doubtless relate to its eminence among the nations as indicated in the succeeding verses. This eminence is based on the fact that Zion is beloved by Jehovah above all the other cities of Judah. Even the very mountains upon which the city is founded are to be regarded as holy. The whole Psalm is based on the purpose of Jehovah to make Zion the most glorious of all places on earth; and the leading thought is, that the nations of the earth shall at some time in the future count it an honor to have been born in that sacred city.

**Messianic
Character.**

The Messianic character of the Psalm is apparent partly by the ideal description of the honor which the city shall enjoy, and partly by the manifest implication that the nations one after another shall become citizens in God's realm by virtue of a special birth in Zion. Here we no longer view the nations as tributary to Jehovah, or as merely doing voluntary homage, as in Ps. xlv or Isa. xix, but as citizens by birth, virtually sons. The nations thus re-born will belong to Jehovah, and will sustain to Him a most near and sacred relation. Such a relationship to Jehovah is clearly ideal; and if it be realizable at all, it can be so only in Messianic times and by the universal prevalence of Messianic influences.

3. *The Advent of Jehovah. Hab. iii.***Time of Writing.**

The time of the writing of the Book of Habakkuk was probably in the Babylonian period, or just before the beginning of that period.

This is indicated by 1:5, 6:

“For I am working a work in your days, which ye will not believe though it be told you; for, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, that marched through the breadth of the earth, to possess dwelling-places that are not theirs.”

The Chaldeans were the Babylonians; and the expression “in your days” indicates that the Babylonians were to come upon Judah in the generation in which this Book was written. The time was probably near 605 B. C., when the battle of Charchemish was fought, after which the victor, Nebuchadnezzar, determined to march through Palestine against Egypt. He did meet the Egyptians, and by a decisive victory took possession of all the land from the border of Egypt to the river Euphrates, so far at least as the king of Egypt held sovereignty (2 Kings 24:7). Afterward he also took Jerusalem, and carried away some 10,000 persons into captivity about 599 B. C.; then later, about 588 B. C., he completely overthrew the city. At the time of Habakkuk the fall of the city was imminent, but had not yet occurred.

Content of the Book.

The prophecy of Habakkuk assumes the form of a conversation between the prophet and Jehovah. The prophet complains to Jehovah that divine justice is not more promptly executed upon the wicked inhabitants of Judah; for violence and strife and law-breaking abound in the land (1:2-4). To this Jehovah answers that he will raise up the Chaldeans, who are a powerful and relentless people, and that they will overrun the land of Judah, and thoroughly punish that wicked generation (1:5-11). The prophet then complains that the Chaldeans, like cruel fishermen, catch the nations as in a net, and rejoice at their misery, and in selfish glee boast over the success of their violence; and they spare not even those peoples who are much better than themselves (1:12-17). Jehovah again responds in chapter ii, that the Chal-

deans themselves shall hasten to their end; for it is not possible that a nation so wicked as they, although used temporarily as a scourge against others, should pass unpunished for their own iniquity. A fivefold woe is therefore pronounced upon the Chaldeans. The third chapter is a prayer by the prophet in which he describes Jehovah coming in judgment both against His own people and against the nations about them.

A notable statement is made in 2:4, "Behold his soul is puffed up, it is not upright in him: but the righteous shall live by his faith." The righteous here stand in contrast with the haughty Babylonians, who do not regard Jehovah. The righteous, however, will find security by their faith in Jehovah.* This principle of faith is emphasized by Paul (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11), who shows that salvation is not by perfect obedience to law, but by faith. The prophet's thought is that safety is not by a vain confidence in national power, but by faith in Jehovah. The prophet really announces a principle that is valuable in every age, and that lies at the foundation of all acceptance with the living God. It is not strictly a prediction; but it is an announcement of that cardinal truth which underlies all true loyalty in the divine government, and without which the government of God would be turned into anarchy.

The prayer of Habakkuk in the third chapter calls upon Jehovah to revive His work and to remember mercy toward Judah. Then follows a description of the advent of Jehovah to His people in great majesty and glory for the purpose of punishing nations and of saving the chosen people. The warriors of the Chaldeans were to fall by their own weapons (v. 14). And the prophet closes with an ex-

*The Hebrew word for "faith" here is sometimes used in the sense of "faithfulness" (Isa. 11:5, et al.), and frequently signifies that element of character that may be called integrity; and it was the Septuagint that translated it "faith," from which it was brought over into the N. T. (Rom. 1:17), and made an important element in salvation. This may be regarded neither as an accident nor an error. The integrity of the righteous committed them to Jehovah, and made them His people; and it is to such that Habakkuk extends the hope of salvation (3:13,18, 19). As over against the heathen Chaldean, the man of faithfulness is essentially the man of faith in Jehovah.

ultation because Jehovah brings salvation and strength, and makes His servant to walk on high places. The whole description is in the highly wrought imagery of the most passionate poetry of the Hebrews. The leading intent of the passage appears to be to magnify Jehovah above all other gods and to foretell the triumph of Jehovah's people.

**Messianic
Elements:
Faith.**

The Messianic elements in this book may thus be noted: (1) The primary and important condition of salvation is faith in God (2:4).

This anticipates the fundamental character of faith in the Christian economy. Faith in Christ occupies in the new dispensation the same place that faith in Jehovah held in the days of the prophets. It is the same necessary principle of loyalty in the divine government in all ages; and while its announcement here is not a matter of prediction, it is none the less Messianic in value.

**Future of
Nations.**

(2) The nations are to fall on account of their sins, but God's people are to be saved by the coming of Jehovah for their rescue (3:13). It is certain that one great nation after another among the ancients came to a sudden and disastrous end on account either of corruption that hopelessly weakened military defenses, or the ambition of leaders for conquest by war which made the nations about them combine for their overthrow. Meanwhile the kingdom of heaven has steadily grown in power from the day it was established until the present time. Existing conditions point unmistakably to the downfall of every power that is based upon wicked principles and the promotion of every institution that stands upon a basis of honor and right.

**Jehovah the
Strength of His
People.**

(3) Jehovah is the strength of His people, and will exalt them (3:18, 19). The people of God have never exhibited unusual military or political power, nor have they as a rule expected these resources to sustain them or to forward their cause. On the other hand, those instances in European history in which political authority was exercised by the church have not commended the cause of genuine christianity to the confidence of discerning people. Jehovah, not swords and spears, is the true

defender of His people; and in every age of persecution the weak and struggling advocates of truth and duty have rapidly increased in spite of opposition, and have rather seemed to be helped by the very forces that sought their destruction. To what extent the prophet may have had this truth before his mind, we may not know; but he had announced a principle, the significance of which ages of Christian history have only made more conspicuous.

4. *Jehovah's Throne in Jerusalem. Jer. iii. 14-18.*

Historical Environment. The time in which this prophecy was written is made known in verse 6, "Moreover Jehovah said unto me in the days of Josiah the king," etc. Josiah reigned 640-609 B. C.; and attempted to produce a great reform among the people of Judah. During the earlier years of his reign, he was under the influence of Hilkiah the high priest and others who were associated with the priest, especially Huldah, a prophetess of Jehovah. Hilkiah brought to the king a copy of the law, now generally supposed to be the book of Deuteronomy, by which he was actuated to make great reforms in the religious and moral conduct of the people. The worship of foreign gods was discouraged, and many of their altars and other places and objects of worship were destroyed while the worship of Jehovah was strongly supported. It was doubtless in co-operation with this effort that the prophecy of Jeremiah in this passage was produced.

The Text. "Return, O backsliding children, saith Jehovah; for I am a husband unto you: and I will take you, one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: and I will give you shepherds according to my heart, who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. And it shall come to pass, when ye are multiplied and increased in the land in those days, saith Jehovah, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of Jehovah; neither shall it come to mind; neither shall they remember it; neither shall they miss it; neither shall it be made any more. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of Jehovah, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the stubbornness of their evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I gave for an inheritance unto your fathers."

Content.

This prediction contemplates a captivity of Judah, from which the people shall be returned, not as a whole, but a few from each city or family shall be found faithful enough to be restored to their former country. The ark of the covenant shall not then be remembered, because it is not to exist after the exile; but the whole city of Jerusalem shall become sacred as the ark has been, and be called "the throne of Jehovah." This really predicts that the time is coming when the holy city will sustain to Jehovah a closer relation than it has in former times.

A few features of this prophecy appear to be

Messianic Ideas: Messianic.

**Jehovah a
Husband.**

(1) Jehovah is to be a husband to Judah. A similar thought had been uttered by Hosea concerning Jehovah and Northern Israel. This relation implies great faithfulness on the part of Jehovah toward His people, especially since the nation itself had proved faithless to Him. It also implies a purpose in the mind of Jehovah to be fulfilled toward His people in the future, and this purpose always necessarily Messianic.

**Instruction of
Jehovah.**

(2) The people at that time shall be well instructed by persons whom Jehovah will appoint. This accords with the prophecy of Isaiah (11:9) that the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah; and it indicates that the prophets foresaw more than political blessings, and regarded popular education concerning divine matters as one of the elements of the future glory of man. It is notable that this is one of the crowning features of the Messianic plan of advancing the race.

**Sacredness of
Jerusalem.**

(3) Jerusalem shall be the throne of Jehovah, and become sacred after the manner in which the ark of the covenant was sacred in the temple. This implies not only the presence of Jehovah, as already more than once predicted, but that this presence shall be so complete and satisfactory to the people of God, that they shall not miss the ark of the covenant, which shall cease to exist. The ark was lost at the time of the Exile, and a new one was not made when the Israelites returned; but the coming of Christ

brought the divine presence so perfectly to men that the ark was far outclassed in glory, and a more perfect access to God was secured through the Christ than the temple ever offered.

**Nations
Gathering to
Jerusalem.**

(4) All the nations shall be gathered to Jerusalem unto the name of Jehovah, and engage in His service. This is similar to the prophecy of Isaiah (2:3), in which many people should go up to the mountain of Jehovah to be taught in His way. Literally no such event has ever occurred; but if we understand that Jerusalem represents the new Zion, the church, all these references to the exaltation and glory of Jerusalem become transparent. It is practically impossible that the nations should go up to the literal city, but it is the divine plan that all men shall be invited into the church. Not only so, but christianity has already made sufficient advances among the darkest of heathen nations to prove that peoples of all kindreds and classes are ready to accept Christ and to come into fellowship with his people.

**Reunion of
Exiles.**

(5) The regathering of the exiles of Judah and their reunion with Israel, although to some extent literally fulfilled after the captivity, may refer either primarily or typically to the return of all peoples to the single worship of Jehovah. Unity among the people of God in the Messianic age is a favorite theme with the great prophets.* This reflects in some measure the attitude of these prophets toward the division between the Northern and Southern kingdoms; and it certainly indicates their foresight of the unity of the nations of the earth which has begun to be realized in Christ. Evidently the more perfect Christian union can be made, the nearer the church will approach to the prophetic ideal.

5. *The Righteous Branch. Jer. xxiii. 5-8; xxxiii. 14-22.*

The Text.

“Behold, the days come saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called: Jehovah our righteousness. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that they shall no more say, As Jehovah liveth, who

*In Isaiah xi. 12, 13, the Return of the exiles of Israel and Judah and the relations of peace between them are predicted in connection with the Messianic age of peace.

brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, As Jehovah liveth, who brought up and who led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all the countries whither I had driven them." Jer. 23:5-8.

Occasion.

This prophecy seems to have been written in the days of Jehoiachin (22:24-28), either just before or just after his captivity, when the question of an empty throne had to be considered by the people of Judah, Jeremiah was announcing not merely the captivity of the king, which may have been apparent to all, but that Jehovah had rejected him and his posterity from sitting on the throne of David (22:30). These events occurred about 599 B. C. 2 Kings 24:10-16.

A New King.

The prophecy clearly foretells the appearance of a descendant of David, who shall occupy the throne when the house of Jehoiachin shall be set at nought, and who in contrast with the reign which is just closing shall deal wisely and execute justice in the land. In commemoration of the of the character which he shall have, the prophet preannounces his name "Jehovah Our Righteousness." This name implies that perfect human righteousness may not be expected,* but that Jehovah must be the source of righteousness among men; and the recognition of this fact is essential to the most perfect worship. So great will be the change when that new ruler shall come that even the form of oath by which the people swear shall be changed. Whereas heretofore they have sworn by Jehovah who brought the people out of Egypt, hereafter they will swear by Jehovah who brought His people from the lands of their exile. So great will be the disaster of the captivity, and so remarkable will be their deliverance, that these events shall overshadow in history the exodus of the Israelites out of Egypt. This clearly puts the reign of the new king beyond the time of the Exile, and leaves it indefinite as respects its date.

A Similar Oracle.

"Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will perform that good word which I have spoken concerning the house of Israel and concerning the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause a Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall

*"It is not said that the Messiah is Jehovah our righteousness, but that he is called Jehovah our righteousness, because in him and through him Jehovah is perceived to constitute His people's righteousness." Oehler's O. T. Theology.

execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely; and this is the name whereby she shall be called, Jehovah our righteousness. For thus saith Jehovah: David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt-offerings, and to burn meal-offerings and to do sacrifice continually. And the word of Jehovah came unto Jeremiah, saying, Thus saith Jehovah: If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, so that there shall not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he shall not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured; so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me." Jer. 33:14-22.

Levitical Work. In part this passage is very similar to the one quoted above, and was probably written about the same time. It makes a very emphatic addition to the former statement by announcing that David shall never be without a descendant to occupy his throne, and that the Levitical priesthood shall be continued with their sacrifices. This was doubtless the only method then possible of foretelling the perpetuation of the kingly and priestly functions in the antitypes of David and the Levitical priests, Christ and Christian people. At the same time while this permanence of royal and sacerdotal functions is announced, we may note that literally the Levites offered their sacrifices only during the period between the return from Exile and the fall of Jerusalem under Titus A. D. 70. during the greater part of which time David had no heir upon the throne; but after this period both the regal and sacrificial duties were represented by the Messiah. It is only by way of a conferred honor that Christians are said to be "kings and priests unto God" (Rev. 1:6). The "covenant of the day" probably refers to the covenant made with Noah concerning the perpetuity of day and night (Gen. 8:22); and the thought is, if the constant recurrence of day and night can be prevented, then may the coming of David's representative be prevented.

Messianic Ideas. The Messianic ideas of these two passages
The "Branch." may be briefly summed up as follows: (1) The Branch belonging to the family of David shall rule in righteousness. This is similar to the prophecy in Isaiah 11:1-5, in which the wisdom and righteousness of the coming

ruler are very fully described. This passage evidently refers to the same ideal ruler as that in Isaiah; and if they are truly prophetic at all, the prophecy can rest on no other than the Messiah.

Future Safety. (2) The future safety of Judah and Israel is foretold (23:6). Since this is to be in the days of the Branch, it can hardly be seriously taken otherwise than as a prediction of the great salvation and state of security which men shall enjoy in Christ, yet put under the figure of Judah and Israel which in that day stood for the people of God. Otherwise, also, it will be difficult to give a satisfactory interpretation of the prophecy in harmony with the divine purpose.

Priesthood. (3) The prophecy concerning the Levitical priesthood appears to catch up anew the promise of God to Phinehas (Num. 25:12, 13); while that concerning the Davidic offspring renews the "sure mercies" of David as promised in 2 Sam. 7:11-18. Both of these point forward to the continuance of a divinely appointed royalty and priesthood.

"Seed of David." (4) The "seed of David" shall be innumerable (33:22). In this case the seed of David is probably to be understood as Paul interprets "Abraham's seed" (Gal. 3:29). Christ is Abraham's seed, and all those who are in Christ are counted as Abraham's seed with him. Likewise, the Messiah is David's seed, and doubtless with him are to be counted also all those whom he calls "brethren" (Heb. 2:11-12). If this suggestion be correct, it readily accounts for the emphasis laid upon the certainty that the seed of David will be multiplied. It also makes more forceful the prediction as seen in the light of the prophet's situation; for over against the rejection of Jehoiachin and his descendants, which gave a most discouraging outlook for the house of David, the prophet sets the promised ruler and an innumerable host of the seed of David associated with the king.

6. *The Restoration and New Covenant. Jer. xxx, xxxi.*

The Field in Anathoth. In the tenth year of Zedekiah, the last Davidic king on the throne of Judah before the Exile, the prophet was told to buy a field in Anathoth not far from Jerusalem, which he did, paying the price and tak-

ing a deed according to law. The deed was delivered to a friend to be put away for preservation; and a prophecy was uttered that although the land should be devastated and the people taken into captivity, the time would come when property would again be valuable in Judah. Jer. 32:6-15. As chapters xxx, xxxi are meditations on the return from captivity, it is probable that they were written about the same time as that of the purchase of the field.

**King and
Prince.**

These two chapters are poetic, and have been called the "triumphal hymn of Israel's salvation" (Hengstenberg). The passage contemplates the capture of Babylon and her desolation with all the griefs and cruelties attendant upon the downfall of the nation, and then pictures the return of Judah under Jehovah's direction with the gladness and hope which that event will bring. Incidentally the prophet remarks that the people of Judah and Israel "shall serve Jehovah their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them" (30:9). This repeats the prophecy that God will raise up a man of David's house to be the future king of Israel. This thought is contained in verse 21,

"And their prince shall be of themselves,
And their ruler shall proceed from the midst of them;
And I will cause them to draw near,
And he shall approach unto me:
For who is he that hath had boldness to approach me?
Saith Jehovah."

These words imply that the coming ruler will arise from the midst of the common people; and it further signifies that he shall act as God's high priest. The expression, "approach unto me," with the implied danger of such a service doubtless refers to the work of the high priest within the holy chamber of the temple* and the penalty of death which must befall any person who dared

*It is worth while to notice Oehler's remark (O. T. Theol. p. 528): "A specific relation of the Messiah to Jehovah such as no human being could claim for himself is here alluded to by Jeremiah." This assumes that the "approach" to Jehovah alluded to in the passage is too near and sacred for a priest to make, and interprets the question, "Who is he that hath had boldness to approach me?" in the sense that no one has dared to approach Jehovah, because no human being could do so. It assumes further that the Messiah, as more than human is alone worthy to approach God. If this be the thought, the passage is a direct prediction of the Messiah.

thus to come into the divine presence without official right.

A notable prophecy appears in 31:15:

**Weeping in
Ramah.**

“Thus saith Jehovah:
A voice is heard in Ramah,
Lamentation, and bitter weeping,
Rachel weeping for her children;
She refuseth to be comforted for her children,
Because they are not.”

We are informed that Ramah was the place where the captain of those that guarded the captives released Jeremiah from among “all the captives of Jerusalem and Judah that were carried away captive unto Babylon” (40:1). This signifies that when the city of Jerusalem fell into the hands of the Babylonians, the captives were collected at Ramah, where they waited until they were taken away to Babylonia. The scene at Ramah where thousands of wretched people were kept under guard ready to be carried away from their native land, must have been one of great sadness. It was one over which, poetically speaking, even Rachel, wife of Jacob and the beloved ancestress of some of the tribes of Israel, might be said to weep. It is certain that Jeremiah has reference to this scene, because in 31:16 Jehovah exhorts the people to refrain from weeping, since “they shall come again from the land of the enemy.” This implies that those who wept were in grief because they were about to be taken into the land of an enemy. In Matthew 2:17, 18, these words are quoted and represented as being fulfilled by the lamentations in Bethlehem when Herod slew the infants in that town in his attempt to kill the Messiah. It is not possible that Matthew regarded the grief of Bethlehem as a direct fulfilment of the passage in Jeremiah, for he could not help noting that the name of the city was wholly different.* He could only mean that the event of which Jeremiah speaks was typical of the one to which he him-

*Two Ramahs are known to us, one near Gibeon, about five miles north of Jerusalem (Josh. 18:25); and the other farther north in Mount Ephraim (1 Sam. 1:19). Some scholars urge that possibly there was another Ramah near Bethlehem that was the object of Matthew’s reference; and since Rachel was buried in that vicinity, she might be thought to have a deep interest in the people there. Such uncertain elements are worth very little to the interpreter, and the less because it is almost certain that the captives mentioned by Jeremiah were guarded in one of the Ramahs north of Jerusalem.

self alludes, and that in the days of Herod there was simply enacted another scene over which Rachel might bow in lamentation.

A very remarkable prophecy is also found in
31:22:

The
"Backsliding
Daughter."

"How long wilt thou go hither and thither,
O thou backsliding daughter?
For Jehovah hath created a new thing in the earth:
A woman shall encompass a man."

Various views have been proposed in explanation of these words. (1) The "backsliding daughter" refers to Judah, which at this time was very wicked. The nation is encouraged not to be in doubt concerning the future, as one going hither and thither in confusion; for Jehovah is to bring about a new condition in which people will be in so great safety that a woman will be able to protect her husband rather than that the husband must protect his wife. In this view the passage means simply to announce a time of peace and security, which would certainly be a new thing to the people of Jeremiah's time. (2) Another view is that Israel as a feeble woman will be able to take even the manlike Chaldeans captive (Calvin). (3) By another view it is strictly Messianic, and refers to the miraculous conception of Jesus by Mary. In support of this last view it is said that "created" implies a divine power, a miracle; that "woman" implies an individual rather than a collection of persons; that "a new thing" means something that never existed before, such as the conception and divine-human personality of Christ. It is by no means certain that the last view is preferable to the first.

Children's
Teeth on Edge. 29, 30,

Another valuable statement is found in 31:

"In those days they shall say no more,
The fathers have eaten sour grapes,
And the children's teeth are set on edge.
But every one shall die for his own iniquity:
Every man that hath eaten the sour grapes,
His teeth shall be set on edge."

It is probable that the people of Judah had resisted punishments for the sins of their fathers, and that the prophet informs them that the time is coming when they will see that God visits

penalties only upon those who are themselves guilty; and then they will no longer say that the children are affected by the doings of their parents, but rather that each will acknowledge that he himself is guilty and suffers a just retribution.

**The New
Covenant.**

Perhaps the most important statement of these chapters is that in 31:31-34,

“Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah,
That I will make a new covenant
With the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:
Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers
In the day that I took them by the hand
To bring them out of the land of Egypt;
Which my covenant they break,
Although I was a husband unto them, saith Jehovah.

But this is the covenant that I will make
With the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah:
I will put my law in their inward parts,
And in their heart will I write it;
And I will be their God, and they shall be my people:
And they shall teach no more every man his brother,
Saying, Know Jehovah;
For they shall all know me,
From the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah:
For I will forgive their iniquity,
And their sin will I remember no more.”

This prediction promises that a new method of securing obedience to Jehovah will be followed in the later times; and this will not be after the Mosaic method of prescribing strict legal enactments, but by the new plan of planting convictions in the mind and the promptings of love in the heart. See Heb. viii. In this way men will be moved by the loftiest considerations, and conscience will have a more perfect sway in the soul. This was begun feebly by a regular system of instruction in divine things after the Exile; but even in that period law was still dominant, and escape from punishment was still a leading motive. Only in the Christian covenant may be found a genuine illustration of the new plan of governing the world. By this new covenant every person who comes to God must be informed, not only concerning the Divine Being, but also concerning Christ and his work for the race. In this way men are taught the fundamental principles of God's will before they enter the covenant; and when they enter, the reign of law is set aside, and the

grace of God offering pardon of sins becomes the new ground of justification. Under this new covenant each person will be taught his duty continually, and the love of God and man in the heart will constantly inspire deeds far nobler and more philanthropic than the law requires. Under such circumstances it would be impossible for the people to regard themselves as belonging to Jehovah while really they were unfaithful and iniquitous as in the days of Jeremiah. Acceptance with God under the new covenant is a personal and definite committal of the soul to Him, and will not depend on birth or nationality. It seems impossible that the character of the Christian covenant should be so clearly foretold except by a direct Messianic prevision.

7. *Permanence of David's Covenant. Psalms lxxxix, cxxxii*

Date.

The date of these two Psalms may not be definitely ascertained; but Ps. 89:38-46 clearly refers to some great national reverses, defeat and devastation, in which event the crown and throne of David were lost. This was true in Jeremiah's time, and not so notably true at any other time. The character of the Psalms throughout corresponds well with this date; and since no more appropriate period can be assigned for them, their Messianic contents may well be studied in relation to the events of Jeremiah's age.

**Reference to
David's
Covenant.**

The leading reference to David's covenant is found in 89:3, 4,

"I have made a covenant with my chosen,
I have sworn unto David my servant:
Thy seed will I establish forever,
And build up thy throne to all generations."

With this should be compared the promises to David in 2 Sam 7:11-16. This covenant containing the promises was made with David while he was on the throne. Therein the seed of David was established upon the throne forever. This could not be exhausted in the reign of Solomon, nor even in that of any successor of Solomon.

**Messianic
Elements:
Covenant and
Throne.**

The chief Messianic elements of these Psalms are, (1) The covenant between Jehovah and David is recalled to mind, and God's faithfulness with respect to it is commemorated. The promise is held by Him the more sacred, be-

cause it was confirmed by an oath. (2) David's seed and his throne are to endure forever (89:29). It can hardly be questioned that this prophecy includes Christ and the Messianic reign.

(3) Zion will be Jehovah's dwelling-place forever (132:13, 14). The perpetuity of Jehovah's dwelling-place in Zion can hardly refer to any predetermined continuance of the temple in Jerusalem or of the priestly functions according to the Mosaic economy; but must refer to the antitype of Zion and of the temple, the church. The city of Jerusalem was at the beginning of christianity the seat and source of the Christian instruction which went abroad among the nations; and as such a source or center for the Church and its work, it came by a very natural figure of speech to stand for the church itself. Not only so, but also when the prophet is uttering a prediction concerning the church, it is most convenient for him to use some such term as Zion to represent the future spiritual body which he was not prepared to describe more particularly. This same principle applies to the Levitical priesthood, to the temple and to the country of Judah; for in all cases in which the prophet must speak of future institutions, he must use terms familiar to his people to whom he could not describe the new institutions more exactly.

(4) The priests of Zion will be clothed with salvation, and the saints shall shout for joy (132:16). It is probable that the prophecy includes the righteous priests and other worshipers of Jerusalem who in any age might bring acceptable service to Jehovah; but must also include the chosen ones of the Messianic age, who with the most perfect sacrificial offering to commend them to God, and with the most direct access to God through Christ, are enabled to worship Jehovah in the manner which is more acceptable to Him than any other which He ever ordained. The clothing of salvation well becomes those who have washed their robes in the blood of the lamb and have prepared to be arrayed in spotless white; so also the shout of joy is most appropriate to those who through Christ have overcome the world.

SUMMARY.

The emphatic features of Messianic import in those prophecies which seem to belong to the period of Jeremiah may be summed up as follows:

1. Jehovah will be among His people, who in their own lands will worship Him in humility, and renounce all other gods; and a judgment shall be visited against the heathen in all lands, while the people of Jehovah shall have a spiritual restoration and enjoy the presence of God in their midst. Zephaniah.

2. Nations shall be reborn in Zion into the citizenship and service of Jehovah. Ps. 87.

3. Although Jehovah will chastise His own people, He will punish wicked nations with complete overthrow, and save the just by faith. Habakkuk.

4. Jehovah's throne will be in Jerusalem, where the righteous shall be well instructed, and where the nations shall be gathered into the service of God. Jer. 3:14-18.

5. The righteous Branch shall rule on David's throne, and the priesthood shall never fail. Jer. 23:5-7; 33:14-22.

6. A combined priest and ruler shall arise from among the common people; and a new covenant with its principles deeply implanted in the heart of every one with whom it is made shall be set forth by Jehovah, and shall be accompanied by the knowledge of Jehovah and of His will and the forgiveness of sins. Jer. 30:9, 21; 31:31-34.

7. The covenant formerly made with David, by which his seed and his throne should endure forever, will stand, and will be further supported by the dwelling of Jehovah in Zion. Psalms 89 and 132.

Ideas of the Period. We have noted hitherto that in every period of prophecy the Messianic features have a certain correspondence to the religious and political conditions in the time of the prophets. In Jeremiah's period wickedness prevailed in Judah, and an overthrow of the Davidic rule with the captivity of the nation was imminent; and these seemed to endanger the promises of God to David and to threaten a permanent separation between Jehovah and the people whom

He had adopted for His own. Accordingly, the burden of prophecy at this time, so far as it is Messianic, relates to Jehovah's presence and continuance in Zion and to the certainty that David's seed shall not fail to inherit his throne. In keeping with these leading prophecies, are those in which the nations of the earth are involved, either as being overthrown for their vices and cruelties, or as being reborn in Zion and admitted to the service of Jehovah. The fact that the covenants by which the people had been bound to Jehovah hitherto had been broken by them, served as a suitable occasion to predict that a new covenant would be formed in which those who might be interested would not stand in ignorance of God and be cast away unpardoned, but would know Him from the least to the greatest, and be kept in constant acceptance with Him. Thus the threatened overthrow of Zion and her king furnished a suitable occasion to promise a future dwelling of Jehovah in the holy city, an international citizenship, and a new and better covenant.

CHAPTER VII.

PROPHECIES OF THE EXILE.

1. *The Stone Cut out of the Mountain.* Dan. ii. 31-45.

The Time. Concerning the date of the writing of the book of Daniel in its present form, it is not necessary here to enter into discussions nor to reach conclusions, in order to meet the requirements of this study. If we may be able to determine the time out of which the prophecy is represented to have arisen, and hence to secure the historical circumstances which are intended by the author to be the environment of his message, enough will be gained to meet the present need. A discussion of the date of the book of Daniel is reserved for another work. According to the prophetic record king Nebuchadnezzar had a notable dream in the second year of his reign. It is known that this king ruled for a short time jointly with his father; but it is probable that in this case the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign after the death of his father is meant. Daniel was captured by the Babylonians and carried away from Palestine in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakin (Dan. 1:1), which was about one year before the independent reign of Nebuchadnezzar began (Jer. 25:1), or about 605 B. C. It would seem that the king had this dream after the three years of Daniel's preparation had expired; for Daniel is immediately exalted to a rank that would be inconsistent with a continuance of his test as a youth. Dan. 1:5, 18. So the dream occurred about 602 B. C.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream. In his dream the king saw a great image, whose head was of fine gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet part of iron and part of clay; and he saw a stone cut out of the mountain which broke in pieces the image,

beginning with the feet and finally destroying the image altogether, the stone then becoming a great mountain filling all the land. Daniel's interpretation was that the different parts of the image represented four different kingdoms that should rise in succession, that of Nebuchadnezzar being the first; and the stone represented the kingdom of God. The description of this last kingdom is given in these words:

"And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."

The Kingdoms. Interpreters are not altogether agreed in their identification of the four kingdoms. Some hold that they are the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Greek and the Roman; while others say they are the Babylonian, the Median, the Persian and the Greek. One point of importance in this diversity of interpretation is the time in which the kingdom of God should be set up. The prophecy says that it should be "in the days of those kings;" but if the last of the four kingdoms was the Greek, it was overthrown, and "those kings" had perished before the advent of the Messiah and the beginning of his kingdom. It is clear that the kingdom of God was set up in the time of the Roman kings; and there is some reason for regarding the Medo-Persian kingdom as one, since neither the Median nor Persian was worthy to be compared with the other great kingdoms until their combination into one strong power. There is in any case no doubt that the little stone represented the Messianic kingdom, not only because no other kingdom of God was set up after Daniel's day, but also because the character of the kingdom as here described exactly corresponds to the Messianic dominion, which is rapidly taking possession of the great kingdoms of the earth, and from a small beginning is gradually assuming immense proportions.

2. *The Reign of the Son of Man. Dan. vii.*

The Time. The time in which this prophecy is set was the first year of the reign of Belshazzar (7:1). It is now assured that this king was a son of Nabonidus, and that

he reigned jointly with his father at least three years (Dan. 8:1); but he was captured about the same time as his father, and hence did not have an independent reign. When the Babylonian kingdom was about to be taken, Nabonidus with a portion of the army surrendered at Borsippa, and soon afterward Babylon was taken, and Belshazzar was probably slain about 538 B. C. Accordingly the first year of Belshazzar may have been 541 B. C.

**Daniel's
Dream.**

Daniel had a dream or night-vision in which he saw four beasts come up from the sea. The first was like a lion with eagle wings, and it was made to stand upright as a man and receive a man's heart. The second was like a bear with three ribs in its mouth, and it was told to arise and devour much flesh. The third was like a leopard with four wings and four heads, and it received dominion. The fourth was a very strong and terrible animal with great iron teeth and ten horns; among the horns a smaller one arose before which three of the former horns were plucked up, and the last horn had eyes as a man and a mouth speaking great things. He saw also one called "the ancient of days," seated on a throne in great glory, surrounded by thousands of ministers: and a judgment was instituted, and the beast with horns was slain and burned, while dominion was taken away from the other beasts. Also one "like unto a son of man," came with the clouds of heaven, and received dominion over the world, and was to have perpetual rule and an indestructible kingdom. The interpretation of this, as given by the prophet, is, that the four beasts are four kings, and the saints of the Most High are to receive an everlasting kingdom. The beast and little horn represent opposition to the saints, but the saints prevail.

**The Everlasting
Kingdom.**

The important part of this prophecy is thus expressed in the record:

"The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all the kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And as for the ten horns, out of this kingdom shall ten kings arise: and another shall arise after them; and he shall be diverse from the former, and he shall put down three kings. And he shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High; and he shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time. But the judgment shall be set,

and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High: his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." Dan. 7:23-27.

From this it is evident that the fourth beast represents an earthly kingdom having many kings; but the number "ten" may be a definite for an indefinite number. This kingdom shall stand in opposition to the kingdom to which the people of God shall belong. It further teaches the final victory of the kingdom of God and the downfall of the earthly kingdom.

**The Kingdom
Messianic.**

It seems probable that the "ancient of days" means Jehovah in His glory. The "One like the Son of Man" seems to represent the Messiah receiving from God His kingdom. The fact that an everlasting dominion and indestructible kingdom are contemplated, makes it almost certain that the Messianic kingdom is meant. It is difficult to conceive of any other or even how a prophet could think of another. It is true that according to 1 Cor. 15:24, 28, the kingdom of Christ shall be delivered up to God, that the Father may be all in all; but this does not interfere with the perpetuity of the kingdom itself.

**The Fourth
Kingdom.**

As in the case of the four kingdoms foretold in connection with Nebuchadnezzar's dream, so in this passage there is some dispute among interpreters on the identity of the fourth kingdom. As before, one view makes it the Greek, and the other makes it the Roman. If it be the Greek, the little horn is supposed to represent Antiochus Epiphanes; but if it be the Roman, the little horn is thought to represent some anti-christian power in the Roman world which may not be certainly identified. The Messianic value of the prediction respecting the everlasting kingdom is not dependent upon the date of the Book of Daniel; for whether the book was finished by Daniel himself or by some person about the time of Antiochus, it must have been two centuries or more before the Messianic kingdom was inaugurated, and it here unmistakably gives a prediction of a circumstance connected with the Messianic kingdom which has proved true, but which had not been told by preceding prophets. There is little ground for

holding that the author must have delivered his message concerning Antiochus after the events had gone to history, as some hold, if it be true that he foretold matters concerning the kingdom of God centuries before they came to pass and before they could be known without supernatural assistance.*

3. *The Seventy Weeks. Dan. ix. 20-27.*

Date. The time of this prophecy, as indicated in 9:1, was "the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes," which seems to have been immediately after the Fall of Babylon into the hands of the Medes and Persians in 538 B. C.

Gabriel's Message. The account represents Daniel as worshipping one afternoon and being visited by Gabriel, who said,

"O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee wisdom and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment went forth, and I am come to tell thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision. Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the anointed one, the prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: it shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troublous times. And after the threescore and two weeks shall the anointed one be cut off, and shall have nothing: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and even unto the end

*While the reasoning given above is valid in support of a possible foresight of Antiochus and his immediate predecessors by an earlier prophet, it does not wholly meet the argument for a later date of the Book of Daniel in its present form based on the improbability that a writer in Daniel's day in the Persian period would foretell at length the history of Egyptian and Syrian kings in the Grecian period, in many of whom the Jews were to have little interest. In fact, the early date of Daniel requires the assumption that God revealed a large amount of history two centuries in advance for reasons that remain obscure to men; for no adequate reason for such a departure from the regular prophetic custom has been discovered. That God could do this, few will deny; but would He? Yet those who urge a later date must note the weakness of an argument based on man's ignorance of divine reasons.

shall be war; desolations are determined. And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and upon the wing of abominations shall come one that maketh desolate; and even unto the full end, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out upon the desolate." Dan. 9:22-27.

Content.

The content of this prophecy is fairly clear. Seventy weeks are appointed within which a remarkable consummation of prophetic events relating to the Jewish people is to be reached. These events are summed up by the prophet: (1) to finish transgression, (2) to make an end of sins, (3) to make reconciliation for iniquity, (4) to bring in everlasting righteousness, (5) to seal up vision and prophecy, and (6) to anoint the most holy. Next, there shall be sixty-nine weeks from the decree to build Jerusalem to the coming of "the anointed, the prince," and during which the city shall be rebuilt. Then, at the end of the period "the anointed" shall be cut off. Last of all, the army of a coming prince shall destroy the city and temple with complete desolation, and cause the regular sacrificial worship to cease.

Character.

In character the prediction is certainly apocalyptic. It is framed in terms purposely indefinite, to prevent certain enemies of the Jews from knowing that they were the objects of the prophecy. Undoubtedly the utterance is given to encourage the Jews during the times of distress, lest they despair of Jehovah's promises, forsake their faith and thwart the divine purpose concerning them. This was the more necessary since the Jews probably expected the predictions of the pre-exilic prophets to be fulfilled immediately after the return from the Exile, which in the condition of the nation at that time was impossible. The long delay of the Messianic blessing and the protracted sorrows of the people made it necessary to foretell an interval whose limits were definite in the mind of God, during which patient endurance must be cultivated.

Questions.

The interpretation of this passage baffles the acumen of the wisest scholar. More than a score of theories have been proposed, against every one of which may be lodged very serious objections. It is uncertain what is

meant by "weeks," whether exact or round numbers are used, when the "commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" was made, whether the seven weeks are to be estimated separately from the sixty-two weeks, whether the "anointed" is the Messiah or Antiochus Epiphanes, and whether or not the prince whose people shall destroy the city is the same as the "anointed." Also other questions arise in attempting to answer these. Under such circumstances it seems becoming to state a view only in a tentative form.

Things to Be Accomplished.

The things to be accomplished within the seventy weeks, or at the end of that period, are: (1) "To finish transgression," or the Hebrew text seems to favor the sense "to restrain transgression;" and this may signify the transgression of the heathen against the Jews, which brought great suffering and impatience to the chosen people. Possibly it may be broad enough to include the transgressions of all men. (2) "To make an end of sin;" and this also may be understood as referring to heathen sins against the Jews, or to the sins of the world as ended in the salvation provided by Christ. (3) "To make reconciliation for iniquity," which means, according to Jewish usage, to make atonement by sacrifice (cf. Lev. 1:4); and since ordinary sacrifices were offered immediately after the return from the Exile, it must apply to that future ideal offering in the Messianic age. (4) "To bring in everlasting righteousness," which must also by its very perpetuity belong to the time of the Messiah, although possibly the language does not forbid a beginning of such righteousness before the coming of the Messiah. It is certain, historically, that no great reformation in the morality of the people occurred before the coming of the Messiah, except such as was connected with the return of the exiles and the work of Nehemiah and Ezra; and the righteousness thus introduced was by no means everlasting. (5) "To seal up vision and prophecy," which may mean either a final cessation of prophetic work, or a fulfilment of prophecies. The former is favored by the Hebrew text which says, "vision and prophet." It is now apparent that the prophetic office ceased directly after the beginning of the Messianic work; but not all prophecy, even Old Testament prophecy, has

been fulfilled. (6) "To anoint the most holy" (Hebrew, "holy of holies"), which is ambiguous. The tabernacle and its furniture and the altar of burnt-offering in the tabernacle court were all to be anointed and deemed most holy (Ex. 30:26-29). Those who hold that none of this prophecy reaches beyond the time of the Maccabees usually apply this to the consecration of the altar of burnt-offering which had been desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes (1 Macc. 4:54). Others, observing that according to one translation of 1 Chron. 23:13 a person, the high-priest, may be "most holy," that the tabernacle and its appointments may be considered typical of Christ and Christian things, and that Christ was anointed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38), and was the only anointed person or thing in the Messianic realm, to which the atonement and everlasting righteousness seem to belong, are convinced that the Messiah himself is in this case the "most holy" (cf. Luke 1:35).

The term "weeks" does not mean sabbaths, "Weeks," as some have asserted, the Hebrew word having no connection with the word sabbath; but the original word is the regular and only word for week in the Old Testament. Most scholars urge that it means here "weeks of years," although it does not have such a meaning anywhere else in the whole Bible. The chief reason for supposing that the week here means seven years is the fact that seventy weeks of years (490 years) seem better than any other meaning to suit the period to which the prediction is supposed to refer. No calculations, however, can quite make the 490 years fit the historical dates of the events here mentioned.

The first decree for the return of the exiles from Babylonia was issued by Cyrus (Ezra 1:1-4) in 536 B. C. Supposing that the "anointed" is the Messiah, who was born 4 B. C., began His ministry 26 A. D., and was crucified 29 A. D., the 490 years are far too short to reach from Cyrus' decree to any time in the life of Christ; and besides this, Cyrus' decree was for the rebuilding of the temple, not "to rebuild Jerusalem." Artaxerxes made a decree in his seventh year, 457 B. C. (Ezra vii), from which some count "seven weeks," or forty-nine years to the year 408 B. C., when

Nehemiah finished his work of rebuilding the city of Jerusalem; then counting "threescore and two weeks," or 434 years, the date 26 A. D. is reached, when Jesus began His ministry, and might be said to be "cut off" by being separated as a victim for sacrifice. This certainly is the nearest approach to a coincidence of dates that has yet been suggested; but unfortunately this decree of Artaxerxes was not "to restore and to build Jerusalem," which this prophecy contemplates.* A later decree by Artaxerxes in his twentieth year, 445 B. C., included the permission to Nehemiah to build the city (Neh. 2:5-8); but 490 years, or leaving off the one week, 483 years, do not reach an event that seems to be predicted in this passage: for it brings us to 38 A. D., about the time of the stoning of Stephen and the call of Saul to his apostleship; or including the other seven years, we come to 45 A. D., which certainly does not mark a notable Messianic occurrence. Many other calculations still more widely miss the mark; and it seems that the interpretation of weeks as seven years each does not result satisfactorily, unless we understand that the prophet was either mistaken in his dates or intended only a loose approximation of the time.**

*In this decree Ezra was sent (1) "to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem;" (2) "to carry silver and gold" offered "for the God of Israel," to be expended in sacrifices; (3) to require provinces "beyond the River" (west of the Euphrates) to aid Ezra; (4) "to appoint magistrates and judges" west of the Euphrates; and (5) to teach and execute the law of God. Ezra 7:13-26. In this there is no allusion to building or rebuilding any part of Jerusalem.

**Orelli follows the theory of weeks of seven years each, counts the first seven during the Exile, 588-536, and observes that the remaining sixty-two weeks end about 100 years before Christ! He then adds, "But these typical weeks in prophecy are not to be taken at all as mere mathematical quantities." We might ask, Why then count them as such quantities? He thinks that "the editor and redactor of the Book of Daniel has identified the last week, following the sixty-two and beginning with the killing of the Messiah, with his own time, and the second half of the same with the desecration of the temple by Antiochus (ix. 27). How he reckoned in order to obtain sixty-two (fifty-two instead) weeks from 536 to 170, has not been satisfactorily shown." Mes. Proph. p. 465. All these remarks only further illustrate the entanglements of the year-day theory. See the author's Principles of Interpretation, pp. 249-252.

A Better View.

The interminable confusion and difficulties of those who interpret the "weeks" to be seven years each, suggest that possibly a better view might be taken. There is no good reason for not understanding the prophet to use the seven weeks, the sixty-two weeks, and other periods elsewhere according to the simple figure of synecdoche, a definite for an indefinite time. The object of the prophecy is not to set dates; for that, like calling names in advance, is too precise to accomplish the true ends of prophecy. The real aim is to encourage the Jewish people not to despair at God's delays and their own sufferings; and this is accomplished by predicting events fraught with great blessing to the Jews in harmony with God's previous promises and by giving the Jews clearly to understand that although the time is not immediately at hand, it is at least definite in the mind of Jehovah. Precisely these things are realized by this prophecy. Either weeks or days used in a prophecy like this would most naturally convey to the Jewish reader the idea of periods of definite lengths in the mind of God, but presumably much longer than literal weeks or days. There is no good reason for assuming that the Jewish mind would ever imagine that a day stood for a year, or that a week stood for seven years.

If the Maccabean date of the book of Daniel "Weeks" Tried be adopted, as many recent scholars recommend, By Maccabean there is still reason for holding that the weeks Date. are definite for indefinite periods. If seven years be counted for each week, and the final events of the prophecy are not to be regarded as later than the time of Antiochus, or his fall, 172 or 168 B. C., the sixty-two weeks, or 434 years, must be counted back from these dates, and would reach to 606 or 602 B. C., the time of the first attack of Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem, much too far back to suit this prophecy. Of course, sixty-nine or seventy weeks, 483 or 490 years, would extend still farther beyond any reasonable date. Accordingly, few interpreters of this class attempt to defend calculations on the theory of seven-year weeks.

The "Anointed."

It can hardly be doubted that the "restoring and building of Jerusalem" in this passage

must be understood to refer to the restoration of the city by the returning exiles from Babylonia. It seems most probable also that the "anointed, the prince," would be interpreted by most Jews who were familiar with preceding prophecies as referring to the Messiah; and if the writer had meant another person, it would be most natural for him to give more specific indication of his purpose. The prophecies concerning David's seed as the occupant of his throne have been numerous and unmistakable; and it is manifest that such a person would be the anointed, and the most eminent anointed one in the expectation of the Jews.* Add to this the indications that the Messiah also should exercise the functions of high priest, who was also anointed, and it becomes the more probable that the Messiah is meant.

At the end of the sixty-nine weeks the
 The
 "Cutting Off," anointed one was to be "cut off, and to have nothing." This has been applied by one class of interpreters to refer to the fall of Antiochus, and by another class to the death of Christ. Certainly the expression "have nothing" is very ambiguous, and might refer to an evil monarch coming abruptly and helplessly to the end of his career under the judgment of God, or to the Messiah slain without posterity and without worldly success as a ruler. If the anointed be the Messiah, as seems best to suit the spirit of the prophecy, and as most of the early Jewish scholars understood, the cutting off must refer to his death, which was certainly a most important feature of the divine purpose in his coming into the world. From the ordinary political point of view Jesus had nothing at all, seeing that he did not establish any visible kingdom, was

*The position and argument of C. A. Briggs on this point are worthy of regard: "We cannot accept the theory, which prevails with the majority of modern critics, that the prophecy relates to the afflictions in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. . . . If we suppose that Daniel was the original author of the prediction, there would be less likelihood of his thinking of the Antiochan affliction, and more intrinsic probability of his thinking of the ultimate affliction in accordance with the usage of Old Testament prophecy. From this point of view the Antiochan times may be regarded as an historical anticipation of the Messianic affliction, but not as the fulfilment of the prediction of Daniel, who agrees with all the prophets in looking forward to the times of the Messiah and disregarding intervening events."

not exalted to a throne, and secured no political eminence among men.

The prince whose people should destroy the city and the sanctuary seems to arise after the anointed one has been cut off. This does not well suit the events following the death of Antiochus; but it seems better to correspond with the fall of Jerusalem under Titus after the death of Jesus. This also comports well with the fact that Jesus, according to the gospel writers, foretold the destruction of the city and the awful desolations connected with it and which are mentioned in this prophecy. The "firm covenant with many for one week" might refer to the covenant of Christ with men, which, during a short period before the fall of Jerusalem, Jesus and his ambassadors were making among the Jewish people; or it might be prophetic of the terms of peace between the Jews and the Romans previous to the fall of the city, but which terminated when the Roman army entered Palestine. If the "firm covenant" was made by Christ, it was he that "caused the sacrifice and the oblation to cease" by making his own sacrifice for the world, and leaving no further need of the offerings of the Mosaic law; but if the covenant was made by the Romans, it was they that caused the sacrifices to cease by the overthrow of the city of Jerusalem and of the temple. This is also sometimes referred to Antiochus, who suspended the Jewish offerings and foully polluted the altar of burnt-offering.* The passage certainly affords room for a difference of interpretation.

**Messianic
Ideas.**

The Messianic character of the prophecy may with some uncertainty be presented thus: (1) God has in mind a definite period before the full accomplishment of His most glorious purposes with the Jews, but He leaves the time indefinite to the people, who are

*Farrar (Expos. Com., Daniel) holds that seven weeks begin with the fall of Jerusalem, 588 B. C., and end 536 with the decree of Cyrus (Ezra 1:2, 3), and that the sixty-two weeks end with the murder of Onias III. by Antiochus about 171 B. C., and yet he encounters in the calculation a discrepancy "of at least sixty-five years." Concerning this he says, "Not one single suggestion has ever accounted for it, or has ever given exactitude to these computations on any tenable hypothesis." He thinks

to understand that His plans are none the less certain of realization. (2) In the course of time transgression is to be finished, an end will be made of sins, the reconciliation for iniquity will be brought about, everlasting righteousness will be ushered in, the prophetic office will be closed, and he that is most holy will be anointed. All these items find a large significance in the mission of Christ, and a comparatively unimportant place in the career of any other. (3) The Anointed One shall be cut off, and his career will seem as a bootless failure among men, because he will attain no such political eminence as common expectation planned for him. (4) The city of Jerusalem and its sanctuary shall be destroyed in war, and thereby the sacrifices and oblations of the Jews shall be brought to an end; but this shall occur not till after the cutting off of that One whose offering shall render all others empty and unavailing.

4. *The Great Retribution. Dan. xii.*

Struggle With Persia.

This chapter opens with an allusion to a crisis in the history of the Jewish people represented in dramatic form. The prophet had before this (10:13) received a vision in which "the prince of the kingdom of Persia" had withstood him, but Michael, who is here called "the great prince who standeth for the children of thy people," had come and assisted the prophet against the prince of Persia. This can only mean that in some way the Jewish people had been in great peril in the hands of Persia, but that by divine help they were delivered. In the vision one of the persons seen by the prophet stood for the Persian power, while the other, Michael, stood for the interests of the Jews. We can imagine that but for divine help the Persian government might have

exactness was not to be expected, and says, "Any exact accuracy of chronology would have been far more surprising in a writer of the Maccabean era than round numbers and vague computations. Precise computation is nowhere prevalent in the sacred books." He recounts Schurer's three "exactly similar mistakes of reckoning" made by Josephus. Had all such writers at the first understood the seventy weeks as a definite for an indefinite period, the simple figure of synechdoche, these discrepancies and accusations of error might have been averted.

completely absorbed the little fragment of the Jewish nation which was in exile in Persian lands; but since God had a far-off purpose connected with the Jews, He did not permit them to be lost among their enemies.

The The following passage contains a remarkable
Resurrection. prediction of a resurrection and retribution:

"And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Dan. 12:1-4.

What "time of trouble" this may be, may not certainly be told; but since the time of Antiochus seems very clearly to be described in the previous chapter, it is probable that his reign, which was full of acts of despotic cruelty, was the time of trouble to which reference is here made. The resurrection seems in the prophecy to follow the "time of trouble;" but it is not so closely connected in the text as to imply immediate subsequence. The writer seems rather to refer to a resurrection at the end of the present age and at the dawn of eternity: This is implied by the terms "some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt," and "as the stars forever and ever." The resurrection can hardly be national, as in Hos. 13: 14, where the restoration of Israel is represented under the figure of a resurrection (cf. Ezek. 37:1-14); but in this case the judgment following the resurrection is for individuals according to the character of their personal lives. In the New Testament similar language is used and applied to a general and personal resurrection (John 5:28, 29; Rev. 20:12, 13). While the very words of Daniel are not quoted in the New Testament, they are imitated, and the thought is parallel. No national resurrection has occurred since Antiochus; for the restoration that slowly followed his death applied mainly to the civil and religious privileges of the Jews, whose national and personal character remained virtually the same as before. If this passage contem-

plates a personal resurrection, the prophecy is in advance of previous predictions which have been only national. When Daniel is told to "shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end," it does not mean that the time of fulfilment had already arrived, but that his prophetic work in written form should be closed up and laid aside to abide the fulfilment.

Another Vision. Another vision is briefly described as follows:

"Then I, Daniel, looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on the brink of the river on this side, and the other on the brink of the river on that side. And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and a half; and when they have made an end of breaking in pieces the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. And I heard, but I understood not; then said I, O my lord, what shall be the issue of these things? And he said, go thy way, Daniel; for the words are shut up and sealed till the time of the end." Dan. 12:5-9.

"Time, Times and a Half."

The persons who appear in the vision are not identified by the prophet, because it was not necessary to know who they were if it be granted only that they were divine messengers. The most valuable feature in their revelation is that which relates to the time of fulfilment, which is expressed in mysterious terms. It is not possible to set a definite sum of years that shall stand in every case for the expression "time, times and a half." Many persons have assumed that "time" equals one year, that "times" equals two years, and that the whole expression equals three and one-half years, which must be reduced to days, and each day stand for a year, making the total 1260 years.* A like sum is reached by computing the "forty-two months" (Rev. 11:2) as 42 times 30 days, and each day counted as a year. This plan of computation is without a foundation in reason or revelation. It is claimed by some that the key to the method is found in

*A far simpler view is adopted by those who regard the period as the time between the desecration of the temple by Antiochus and its reconsecration by Judas Maccabaeus, which was literally three and one-half

Ezek. 4:4-6, in which the prophet is represented as lying upon first one side and then the other in the presence of the people for a certain number of days, and is told that each day shall represent a year appointed of God for him to bear the iniquity of the house of Israel; but the case of Ezekiel furnishes no clue to the prophetic numbers and times in the book of Daniel, nor to any other passage than this one in Ezekiel. That prophet performed a simple symbolic act requiring a certain number of days, each of which represented a year in Israel's history; and the circumstance had no relation to any other prophecy, and may not be understood as a key to any utterances by any other person. Moreover, 1260 years do not find a fitness to history that makes such a computation valuable. It is much better to understand that Jehovah has in mind a definite period, but that he wishes it to remain indefinite in the minds of the Jews. The half time implies greater definiteness in the mind of God than integral times would have indicated. Likewise, in vv. 11, 12, the writer mentions 1290 days and 1335 days, which can best be understood as definite for indefinite periods; for in fact the year-day theory yields no understanding at all, since no satisfactory application of the periods can thus be made to the course of history.

The prophet is further advised concerning the future:

**The Closing
Message.**

“Many shall purify themselves, and make themselves white, and be refined; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but they that are wise shall understand. And from the time that the continual burnt-offering shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. But go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days.”
Dan. 12:10-13.

All this is projected into the indefinite future; for even if the numbers be regarded as certain periods, their application in history remains only a matter of conjecture. The most important matter to the Jew was not a historical date, but a divine intimation that God is concerned with His people and will be so until they have come to that happy understanding of

all things for which they have longed in the dark days of their adversity. They are encouraged to believe that the righteous shall attain a lofty excellence, and that the wicked shall suffer confusion and blindness for their iniquity. They are informed that a blessing is in store for those that patiently await the Lord's time. The prophet himself shall rest, but at the end of the time he shall not be forsaken, but stand in his appointed lot. Thus the main purpose of the prophecy, to encourage the people to hope in God and confidently to trust Him for the fulfilment of all His gracious purposes concerning them, is emphasized at its close.

This chapter seems to contain several items of **Messianic Items.** Messianic interest. (1) A distinction is made among individuals, and every one that shall be found written in the book will be delivered. This is a forecast of the New Testament idea of a distinction in the mind of God between those who are saved and those who are unsaved, and that the final judgment will accord with the divine record respecting the character of individual men. (2) A personal resurrection is foretold, in which some rise to a deathless life, while some are raised up to everlasting shame and contempt. This appears to be a prevision of the general resurrection and separation of men which the New Testament places at the end of the world (1 Thess. 4:16; Rev. 20:11-15). In connection with this, also, the reward of those who turn many to righteousness is announced, and its endless character is revealed. This comports with the unlimited reward in the following life that is promised by the New Testament writers (John 14:1-3; 1 Cor. 15:50-54). (3) A complete desolation shall be made by a power that shall be regarded as an "abomination," whereby the power of the holy people shall be broken to pieces. Taking this in connection with Dan. 9:26, 27, it is apparent that the overthrow of the city of Jerusalem is contemplated. This may not most reasonably be referred to the limited desolations made by various pre-Christian kings of foreign people, such as Antiochus Epiphanes; for their work of destruction was a matter of small moment compared with the final overthrow of the city and extinction of the Jewish nation under Titus 70 A. D. The prophecy of Daniel

was clearly for the benefit of the Jewish people, and the fall of their city which broke in pieces their power and forever scattered them was vastly more important to them than any mere temporary desolations during the period of their national continuance. (4) Again a prediction is made that the regular burnt-offering shall be discontinued; and this doubtless signifies that the whole sacrificial service of the Jews is to be abolished (9:27). (5) Respecting all these coming events no time is set which can be definitely computed; but indication is given by the use of definite for indefinite periods, that in the mind of God time limits have been made, and that the events are the more certain to come to pass. So long as the date of the book of Daniel remains in dispute, its meaning in many passages will be called in serious question; but it cannot be doubted that the book gives intimations of Christian teaching with remarkable accuracy and of inestimable value.

5. *The One Heart and New Spirit. Ezek. xi. 14-21.*

The Author. The author of this prophecy, Ezekiel, was a priest, the son of Buzi, who had probably filled the priestly office at Jerusalem, but had been carried away as a captive by Nebuchadnezzar at the same time with Jehoiachin (2 Kings 24:11-15) about 599 B. C. He was located on the banks of the river Chebar, one of the great canals of Babylonia.* He seems to have been twenty-five years old when taken captive; and it was five years later when he was called to his ministry (1:1-3). One year after his call, about 593 B. C., he was taken in a vision to Jerusalem, and was shown the temple and city, was told that the city should fall in a short time, and that it was the doing of Jehovah that the city should be destroyed on account of the sins of the people (8:1, ff.). The destruction of the city occurred about five years later.

The Message. The present message relates to the exiles in Babylonia, whom the people still residing in Jerusalem disregarded, boasting that Palestine belonged only to

*The Chebar has been recently identified by Hilprecht with the canal that ran through Nippur. *Explorations in Bible Lands*, p. 412.

themselves, and that the exiles were cut off from Jehovah. Respecting this matter Jehovah thus speaks to the prophet:

"Whereas I have removed them far off among the nations, and whereas I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them a sanctuary for a little while in the countries where they are come. Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will gather you from the peoples, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence. And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them a heart of flesh; that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will bring their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord Jehovah."

There is a special significance in the promise **The "Sanctuary."** that God would "be to them a sanctuary for a little while in the countries where they are come;" for the Jews that still remained in Jerusalem had cast off these exiles as if they were wholly rejected by Jehovah. On the other hand, it was the purpose of God to foster faith in the hearts of the exiles, and a little later to send the rest of the inhabitants of Jerusalem into a similar captivity. The word "sanctuary" is generally used for the temple at Jerusalem, from which the exiles were separated, and from which the Jews at Jerusalem supposed the exiles to be forever excluded; but the message means that Jehovah may be worshiped in the lands of captivity as if the people were in the holy city, hence to the captives Jehovah in person will be the sanctuary of their devotions. A house will not be needed for their service, but the Lord himself will receive their adoration.*

Jehovah promises also to give to the exiles one **The "One Heart."** heart, a "heart of flesh," instead of the "stony heart" on account of which they had been so

*Skinner translates this text, "I have been but little of the sanctuary," and says that it "refers to the curtailment of religious privileges and means of access to Jehovah which was a necessary consequence of exile. It implies, however, that Israel in banishment had learned in some measure to preserve that separation from other peoples and that peculiar relation to Jehovah which constituted its national holiness." Com. on Ezekiel.

cruel and disloyal as to deserve captivity; and He further promises to put "a new spirit" within them. The perversity of their heart had prompted them to refuse all the advices of Jehovah's prophets and all the sacred counsels of their law and their fathers and to follow the course of wickedness which their own selfish ambitions had suggested. If such a heart be retained they could never renew their relations with Jehovah. It would be in vain to return to their land if they did not undergo such a change in spirit as to become disposed to obey God. Accordingly the prophet encourages his people to look forward to a better life than they have hitherto led, and hence to expect from God a repossession of the land from which they are about to be driven out. They are to have no longer a stony heart which cannot be influenced by the divine appeals, but a heart of flesh, one that may be softened into sympathy, that is human and humane. He calls this "one heart," because a spirit of sympathy is a spirit of unity; but a spirit of cruelty and inhumanity pre-sages division and strife.

**Messianic
Character.**

It was true that the Jews who returned from Babylonia had a very different spirit from that of their fathers who were carried into exile; for they adopted strict principles of loyalty and religious devotion that restrained them from the idolatrous influences of the nations that were about them, and bound them together in a closer fellowship than they had ever before enjoyed. But while this is true, their disposition toward each other and especially toward other nations was often unkind and unfriendly. When the Messiah arrived in their midst, he found many that deserved the severest rebukes for pride, hypocrisy and cruelty; and he could not introduce his kingdom until his forerunner, the Baptist, had instituted a radical reform among the people. The whole nation was permeated with a spirit of prejudice that not only hindered the progress of his message to the heathen, but that also protested bitterly against his personal attempts to save the sinful among his own people. Thus the new heart in the Jews before the work of the Messiah was a very imperfect one; but this was partly because they had no gospel that powerfully reacted upon the heart so as to produce a thorough reformation. It was the

mission of the Messiah to announce a message among his own people and to all men that would awaken the deepest sympathies of the heart, call into exercise its noblest impulses, and make it conformable to the heart of God by whose love the sacrifice of Christ was made for men. In consideration of the fact that this transforming gospel was in the divine purpose in returning the exiles to their land and in securing a new order of society after the old had been overthrown, it can hardly be doubted that this deeper change of heart and this richer and better Messianic spirit is just the one intended to be foretold by our prophet. This is also confirmed by the fact that this same Messianic influence and remarkable personal transformation secured a spirit of unity, not only among the Jews who were converted, but also between the Jews and Gentiles in spite of all their bitter hostilities. It must be admitted that aside from the gospel of Christ no influence was exerted on the Jews after their exile that was able to produce such ideal results.

6. *The Majestic Cedar. Ezek. xvii. 22-24.*

The Allegory. It was probably during the same vision of Ezekiel which we have already mentioned and in which he was carried to the city of Jerusalem, when Zedekiah had broken his oath with Nebuchadnezzar and had formed an alliance with Egypt, about 593 B. C., that the prophet delivered a notable message in allegorical form concerning the king and the divine purpose. He says:

“Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: I will also take off the lofty top of the cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one, and I will plant it upon a high and lofty mountain: in the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it; and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar; and under it shall dwell all birds of every wing; in the shade of the branches thereof shall they dwell. And all the trees of the field shall know that I, Jehovah, have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish: I, Jehovah, have spoken and have done it.”

Interpretation. This was spoken as a prediction that Zedekiah would soon be carried away to Babylon (vv. 11-20). The emphasis is laid on the pronoun “I” in contrast with Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar will take off the topmost

branch of the nation of Judah, Zedekiah, and he shall perish; but I, Jehovah, will plant a lofty one, and he shall grow to greatness. This signifies that Zedekiah must fall, but that another son of David should rise in his stead;* and though he should be a "a tender one," yet should he grace the mountain top, and thus be exalted above all others. - This received fulfilment so far as Zedekiah was concerned; for he was taken to Babylon, and never returned. The return of Judah to Palestine, however, did not bring an immediate fulfilment of the rest of this prediction; and, indeed, no "lofty one" was set in an eminent place that secured such universal influence as to attract all the world toward himself until the Messiah himself was seated on David's throne. Moreover, it is only in the Messiah that all men have come to know, as this text implies, that the downfall of the wicked kings of Judah and exaltation of a more worthy one was the work of Jehovah. It is, indeed, through the world-wide proclamation of Christian truth that the nations have come to a knowledge of the dealings of Jehovah with men, and especially of His exalted principle of bringing pride into contempt and of lifting humility into honor. It was the vanity of Zedekiah that led him to violate his vows with the king of Babylon which he had made in the name of Jehovah, and to form an alliance with Pharaoh Hophra (Jer. 44:30; 37:5, ff.), and thus to prove faithless both to God and to man. It was the humility of Jesus that prompted him to lay down his life for men, and thus fulfil the high purposes of Jehovah and to achieve the greatest blessings to humanity. If this prophecy had been written a thousand years after the Messiah's coming, it could not better contrast Zedekiah and his most illustrious successor.

7. *The Reserved Mitre and Crown. Ezek. xxi. 24-27.*

The Time and Prophecy.	In the seventh year of the captivity of Ezekiel, about 592 B. C. (Ezek. 20:1), the elders of Israel came to the prophet to ask for an oracle
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*Briggs (Mes. Proph. p. 270) holds that "the sprig represents the faithful and restored remnant of Israel." This does not meet the contrast with Zedekiah which the context plainly implies; and it is inconsistent with the words "tender one," which would be appropriate only to a person.

from Jehovah; and Ezekiel recounted to them the grievous sins of the Hebrew people, and predicted the final overthrow of the city of Jerusalem. To make the prophecy more vivid, he delivers an apostrophe to Zedekiah, who is soon to be taken into captivity. The following quotation includes this apostrophe:

“Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Because ye have made your iniquity to be remembered, in that your transgressions are uncovered, so that in all your doings your sins do appear; because that ye are come to remembrance, ye shall be taken with the hand. And thou, O deadly wounded wicked one, the prince of Israel, whose day is come, in the time of the iniquity of the end, thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Remove the mitre, and take off the crown; this shall be no more the same; exalt that which is low, and abase that which is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: this also shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him.”

**The Sin
and Penalty.**

The iniquity of Jerusalem consisted in a radical departure from Jehovah into idolatry with a consequent lapse into every conceivable kind of crime and folly, and finally in the crowning act of treason against the king of Babylon by a treaty with Egypt. The prophet points to such baseness as uncovered and conspicuous, and accordingly it deserves nothing less than capture and exile. By a vivid anticipation of the speedy fall of Zedekiah he is addressed in the most impressive form, “O deadly wounded wicked one, thou prince of Israel, whose day is come.” With the fall of Jerusalem, both the priests and the king will be taken from their places; and hence the dramatic words, “Remove the mitre, and take off the crown; this shall be no more the same.” The mitre as a symbol of priesthood and the crown as a symbol of royalty were both removed when the king of Babylon overthrew Jerusalem in 588 B. C. Thus the glory of priest and king that had lasted for half a millennium was extinguished in the flood of destruction that for the time swept away the people of Judah from the land which Jehovah had given them for an everlasting possession.

**The Change
Complete.**

Although the priesthood was restored on their return, and a new temple was constructed, yet the ark which represented the presence and accessibility of Jehovah was gone and could never be replaced.

As for the king, he was removed; and so long as a foreign monarch held supremacy in Palestine a descendant of David could not again secure a natural throne in Judah.* The unworthiness of the nation did not justify such an interposition of the divine hand in behalf of the people as would be required to restore them to a state of national independence and prosperity suited to a reorganization of the monarchy. However, it may have been providential that there was no Davidic king to dispute the royal claims of the Messiah when he appeared to establish his spiritual and eternal dominion. It is in foresight of Judah's failure to secure a restored royalty and priesthood in glory equal with that of past generations, that the prophet distinctly says, "This shall be no more the same."

**The Person
of Right.**

After uttering a prediction so revolutionary as this, and one so fraught with disaster and despair, some indication of divine help for the future is required to keep alive a national hope in the hearts of a down-trodden and disconsolate people. A gleam of promise shines through a single clause of the prophetic message, "Until he come whose right it is, and I will give it him." This implies that at some distant time one shall appear who shall have a right to the combined honor of mitre and crown by virtue of a character necessarily opposite to that by which it has been lost. Such a person did not appear before the coming of Christ. It is vain to point to Zerubbabel as prince or Jeshua as priest, who, as Dr. Briggs has well said, "had but shadows of the priesthood of Phinehas and the royalty of David. The priesthood lacked the Urim and Thummim as the principedom lacked real authority" (Mes. Proph. p. 271). It is equally vain to designate any other person before the advent of the Messiah as a fulfilment of this prophecy; for in no proper sense was anyone entitled to this peculiar honor except him to whom it was given by divine be-

*It is notable that the removal of the crown from David's house did not mislead any prophet into the supposition that the throne was lost forever. Oehler has well said, "The continued right of the race of David to the throne is never called in question by prophecy, though it often passes sentence of rejection upon individual kings of Judah." O. T. Theol. p. 525.

stowal by virtue of a Davidic and divine sonship and an order of priesthood that transcended that of Aaron and Phinehas. The right of royalty and of priesthood fitly fell upon him by whose incarnation the divine made a personal abode with men, and who thus joined in one person the two natures which were to be reconciled. It is inconceivable why any other should be regarded so long as the Messianic fulfilment of this prediction seems possible.

8. *The Davidic Shepherd. Ezek. xxxiv. 11-31.*

**Prophetic
Setting.**

It was in the twelfth year of Ezekiel's captivity, 587 B. C., that a fugitive from Jerusalem brought word to the prophet that the city had fallen the previous year (Ezek. 33:21). After a prediction that the few Jews who still inhabit Palestine shall perish on account of their abominations, and after a stinging rebuke to the shepherds of Israel who should have watched over the people as a flock, but who devoted themselves to greed and gluttony, Jehovah announces that He Himself will seek out the sheep of His flock that have been scattered in many lands, and will bring them again into their own land, and feed them upon the mountains and by the waterbrooks of their own country. Thus He will deliver the sheep from the mouths of those shepherds who, instead of feeding the flock, feed only themselves. While the shepherds must be rejected and perish, the sheep shall not be abandoned. Nevertheless Jehovah will judge among His sheep, and make a separation according to character, and at last receive but a portion of the flock (34:1-22).

**The One
Shepherd.**

Respecting the shepherd of Jehovah's flock, the following prophecy is given:

"And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I, Jehovah, will be their God, and my servant David prince among them; I, Jehovah, have spoken it."

In the expression "one shepherd" the unity of Israel is clearly implied. The shepherd cannot be David himself, who had been dead over 400 years, but it must be his descendant and representative, the Messiah. This agrees with the unity of Israel and oneness of the shepherd, since in the perpetual reign of Christ there

can be no rivalry or succession of shepherds.* This singleness of Israel's future ruler is in accord with all the prophecies concerning the Messiah from the blessing of Jacob over Judah down to this date; for nowhere is the ultimate dominion of Jehovah's people to be committed to a succession of princes. This is precisely the contrary of what might naturally have been expected. Human foresight could have discerned only such a rulership as became the successive generations of human monarchs. A trace of the divine may be distinctly seen in the oneness of the Messianic king.

**The Covenant
of Peace.**

Jehovah promises "a covenant of peace" according to which he will cause evil beasts to cease from the land, the showers to fall in their season, the earth to yield its increase, and Israel to know that He is Jehovah. Then shall they dwell securely, and none shall make them afraid. Jehovah will raise up unto them "a plantation for renown, and they shall be no more consumed with famine in the land, neither bear the shame of the nations any more." Such a covenant was precisely what the people of Israel might most desire as exiles in a foreign land. Their highest longing and their fondest hopes pointed toward a repossession of their own country, a return of material prosperity and a protection from the wild beasts of the field and from the more dangerous nations of men.

**The
"Plantation."**

For the term "plantation" the margin of the American Revised Version has "plant," which is probably better. Plantation would mean a garden with fruits for food, like that of Eden; and the passage would suggest simply that Jehovah would cause their country to blossom and bear fruit as a paradise in which little toil would be required for subsistence. On the other hand, the word "plant" suggests the "branch," as in Isaiah 11:1, or possibly the one who shall supply spiritual food for Israel as over against a "famine in the land," which stands in contrast in the text. In any case

*Thus also Orelli (Mes. Pr. p. 367), "The one shepherd, whom the Lord calls with delight His righteous Servant, is he in whom David's virtue will be perfected to the salvation of His Church. This perfection of the Messianic idea stands before the seer's gaze in personal unity, and the ideal must be left thus, otherwise it loses in grandeur."

the object of the passage is to assure Israel that Jehovah is their God, and that they are His people (vv. 30, 31). The end of the prediction is Messianic, since an ideal state of the nation under divine help and protection is contemplated, and hence a state which only an ideal age could produce. It does not follow that the Messianic time must immediately usher in such a condition of Israel; but rather that the Messianic age alone will be able to produce such blessings. Ideal conditions are the potentialities of the Messianic times; and should humanity rise to its possibilities under the Messiah, these things would come to pass. They could be possible only in such a period.

9. *Israel's Purification. Ezek. xxxvi. 23-28.*

Some time after the fall of Jerusalem (36:3),
The Prophecy in Connection. the exact year being unknown to us, but at a time when Israel was desolate and her people the objects of contempt and evil report, this prophecy was uttered to bring them a lesson concerning God's gracious purposes toward them. The following verses contain the important elements of the prediction:

"And I will sanctify my great name, which hath been profaned among the nations, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the nations shall know that I am Jehovah, saith the Lord Jehovah, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all the countries, and will bring you into your own land. And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep mine ordinances, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God."

Kind of Cleansing. The perversity of Israel on account of which they were scattered abroad in various parts of the Babylonian empire, made their cleansing a necessity. They could not be returned to the land of their fathers so long as they were polluted by the idolatries and iniquities of their former career. The prophet represents them as a person ceremonially unclean (v. 17), who was denied the privileges of

the congregation of Israel (Num. 19:20). Before these exiles can return to their land and be received by Jehovah they must be purified just as the person unclean. "Clean water" here probably does not mean unmixed water, since such water was not required by the law to be sprinkled for any purpose; but more likely it means water of cleansing. The preparation of the water for ceremonial cleansing is described in Num. 19:2-9. The ashes of a red heifer that had been burned were kept to be mixed with water; and only the water thus adulterated could be used in the process of cleansing. The sprinkling of this water is the basis of the figure of speech here used. The full meaning is, I will make you clean as one sprinkled with the water of cleansing.

**Manner of
Cleansing.**

The manner of the cleansing is not indicated in this passage, since the words used signify only that a cleansing will take place. The returning exiles were cleansed from the idolatry and other pollutions of their former lives by the experiences of their captivity. Possibly this cleansing may be meant. After the return to Palestine the Jews revived the ceremonial cleansing of the law; but this cannot be meant by the prophet in this place. The dignity of the utterance and the mention of a new heart and a new spirit require us to understand a moral cleansing. This was secured by inducing Israel to forsake her sins and put herself in position to obtain forgiveness of God. Such a cleansing was necessary to a future association and co-operation with Jehovah.

**The New
"Heart and
Spirit."**

The "new heart," as in Ezek. 11:19, implies a vital reformation in Israel with respect to those evils into which the nation fell before the Exile. The "new spirit" also indicates the changed disposition of the people toward Jehovah's statutes; for the stubborn will of the people made it impossible for God to work with them to accomplish His purposes. A more obedient spirit in them would enable Him to develop their character, train their minds to His thoughts, and to make them ready to receive the Messianic disclosures. The promise, "I will put my Spirit within you," does not necessarily refer to the supernatural gifts bestowed upon the early church; but rather to those leadings of the divine Spirit through the prophets and apostles, by which the

people were influenced by higher motives and more exalted principles than those which had governed the conduct of the nation in the past.

How Messianic. This prophecy is Messianic, not in the sense that these promises were to be realized only after the coming of Christ, but rather (1) in the fact that the Jewish people were to be gradually prepared during their experiences between the time of this utterance and the opening of the Messianic age; (2) the preparatory cleansing is but an earnest of the more perfect cleansing to be enjoyed under the Messiah; (3) the "new heart" will be simply an advanced provision for the more perfect disposition which will be induced under the influence of the gospel; while (4) the work of the "Spirit" of God among the returning exiles and their descendants will be but a foreshadowing of the Christian's seal of the divine promise (Eph. 1:13).*

10. *The Resurrection of Dry Bones. Ezek. xxxvii. 1-14.*

The Message.

The prophet describes a vision of a valley full of many bones that were very dry; and the question was asked, "Can these bones live?" The prophet was told to announce that breath should enter into the bones, that sinews should be laid upon them, that flesh and skin should cover them, that spirit should be put into them, and that they should live. After he had uttered the prediction an earthquake occurred, the bones were joined together, bodies were perfected, and they stood up alive as a great army. The significance of the vision is thus presented:

"Then he said unto me, Son of Man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off. Therefore prophesy, and say among them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Behold, I will open your graves,

*To this list some writers add another point. Thus Briggs (Mes. Pr. p. 275): "As there has been a new creation after the manner of the creation of Adam by the inbreathing of the breath of God, so there is a renovation of the earth, and it becomes like the garden of Eden, and Paradise is restored." This is based on verse 35, "And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited." The description of the land exactly suits Palestine in Ezekiel's day, and the verse may hardly be pressed to mean more than a restoration of the cities and fertility of that country simply put in bold terms.

and cause you to come up out of your graves, O my people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I will place you in your own land: and ye shall know that I, Jehovah, have spoken it and performed it, saith Jehovah."

**Meaning of
the Message.**

The meaning of the message seems to be, **that** Israel in exile is as dry bones scattered through a valley, without life and without hope; but Jehovah is able to revive the dead nation, restore its national standing and give it a new prospect. The announcement includes a return of the exiles to Palestine and a renewal of their confidence in Jehovah. The figure of death and graves is not too strong for the necessities of the case. The exiles had lost all national independence and all opportunity of making any united stand against their enemies; and hence their outlook was starless and void. There was as much prospect of the dead coming up from their graves alive as of the Israelites securing a new national career. But such hopelessness, if permitted to continue, would render Israel unsuited to accomplish the divine ends, since it would stand as an insuperable obstacle to the return to Palestine and the restoration to their national functions.

**Incorrect
Interpretations.**

Incorrect interpretations of this vision have been numerous. (1) Some have held that the individual Israelites who had perished in the exile were symbolized by the dry bones, and that their resurrection is here promised. On the contrary, the text distinctly says: "These bones are the whole house of Israel" (v. 11), which indicates that it is the nation which is to be restored to a life, though once lost by transgression against Jehovah. (2) Others have thought that this is simply and only a picture of the conversion of a human soul from sin. The error of this view is indicated by the promise in the text, "I will bring you into the land of Israel." The purpose of the prophecy is clear from the whole context, in which the message is addressed to the exiles who realized that their own national life and hope were gone, and even that their national spirit was extinct. A promise of a restoration to their own land, if assured to them, would revive their national expectation as one is revived who is restored from

death. The statement by Jehovah, "And I will put my Spirit (breath, as in v. 10) in you, and ye shall live," does not indicate a personal regeneration by the Holy Spirit, but a renewal of national life comparable to the breath of life imparted to man at the creation. (3) It is also incorrect to understand this vision to be a direct prediction of the final resurrection of the dead. While it certainly implies that God is able to restore the dead to life, the explanation of the vision as given to the prophet relates to a matter very different from the doctrine of a universal resurrection of the dead. The prophecy is confined to Israel, and adapted to her exilic condition as deprived of national life.

Messianic. This prophecy is Messianic chiefly in the clear expression of Jehovah's special interposition in behalf of Israel with the intent to employ the nation as an exponent of faith in Himself among the nations. Hence the oft-repeated words throughout the passage, "And ye shall know that I am Jehovah." This national resurrection would be necessary to bring about the Messianic events of all following generations if these were to be wrought out through the Israelitish nation. Moreover, the meaning of the vision is not exhausted in a promise to restore the people to the land of their fathers; but the fact that they must know Jehovah implies that a restoration of loyalty to the God of their fathers is primarily intended. The resurrection, therefore, promises a new character on the part of Israel, which is far more important than their repossession of the Palestinian territory. This new character will be an essential factor in their Messianic service; for without it they will be unable to bear the Christian faith to the nations of the world. It does not necessarily imply that a high degree of perfection will be attained, nor even that all Israel will take part in the required reformation; and certainly the prophecy should not be forced to cover the revival of godliness which accompanied the acceptance of christianity.

**Possibly
Typical.**

It is not impossible that the resurrection of the nation from its exilic grave may typify the resurrection of the race; but the prophecy itself does not lend a hint on that question. Typologies when not indicated in Scripture are often matters of conjecture, rather than

scientific interpretation. Nevertheless, this message to Israel must have helped to build up a belief in the resurrection of the upright in heart; for if God would revive a once sinful nation, now as dry and hopeless as bleached bones in the valley, would He not remember His faithful ones in the captivity of death? The vision was certainly a suggestion that a resurrection was not foreign to the divine mind. Yet it can hardly be regarded as a clear announcement of immortality.*

11. *The Unity of Judah and Israel. Ezek. xxxvii. 15-28.*

The Prophecy. The prophet is commanded by Jehovah to prepare two sticks, and to write on one, "For Judah and his companions," and on the other, "For Joseph and his companions;" and to join the two together, the significance of which is thus set forth:

"Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his companions; and I will put them with it, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in my hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thy hand before their eyes. And say unto them thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, whither they are gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all; neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will save them out of their dwelling-places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. And my servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd: they shall also walk in mine ordinances, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall

*The ease with which interpreters import into these prophecies ideas which they do not contain, but which are borrowed from the New Testament, is illustrated in the following sentences from G. Curry, Bible Com.: "This prophecy concerns not only the Israel after the flesh, but the Israel of God, points to a home in heaven, and to a life of immortality. . . . The restoration of the people to the land of Israel had reference to a primary fulfilment in the return from Babylon, but the chief purport of the vision was the promise of restoration from a death in trespasses and sins to a new life of holiness, fulfilled in the Gospel dispensation (John v. 25), but having its consummation in the general resurrection at the last day."

dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, they, and their children, and their children's children, for ever. Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them; and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for ever more. My tabernacle also shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the nations shall know that I am Jehovah that sanctifieth Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for ever more."

Import. The leading import of this utterance is readily discerned. The two sticks represent Judah and Northern Israel, each with the members of other tribes that may be associated with them. It is well known that in the days of Rehoboam, Asa and Hezekiah (2 Chr. 11:12-16; 15:9; 30:11-18), many families of nearly all the ten tribes united with the kingdom of Judah; so that doubtless many hundreds or thousands among the Jews could trace their lineage to other tribes. All these are included with Judah, and in later times, together with others from the ten tribes that may have afterwards joined them in fulfilment of this prophecy, were called Jews. Probably the two sticks were to be joined end to end in the hands of the prophet, so that they would seem one stick to the people, if indeed the two were not united in one by a miracle before their eyes. Thus the perfect union of the two divisions of Israel was impressively prefigured.

Intent. The prophecy is adapted to the condition of the exiles with the intent to inspire in them a clearer hope of a restored national unity and greatness. Undoubtedly the people of Judah and those of Israel, so far as their situation in the exile would permit them to communicate with each other, were often united in sympathy on account of their similar sufferings and kindred ties. This afforded an opportunity to impress upon them the possibility of a more complete union, and at the same time to renew to them the promise of Jehovah that they should return to their land and again become an independent kingdom. The occasion was thus favorable for the full picture that is here presented in a very attractive form concerning the prosperity and blessing that Jehovah will ere long bestow upon them.

**Messianic
Items.**

The items of Messianic interest are not altogether new. The return to the land of their fathers; the one king, David, corresponding to the unity of the kingdom; the cleansing of the people from their idolatry and other sins; the one shepherd; and the covenant of peace, have all been already predicted by this prophet, and most of these events have been foretold previously by others. The chief Messianic value of this passage consists in the completeness of the forecast and the clear, emphatic form in which the Messianic relations between the people and Jehovah and the perpetuity of these relations are presented. The sanctuary promised in the closing words of this prediction is not in this case Jehovah Himself, as in 11:15, 16, but more likely the temple, perhaps the literal building in Jerusalem at first, only to give place to its antitype, the spiritual building of the Messianic age, either of which has become God's dwelling-place among men.

12. *The Fall of the Enemy. Ezek. xxxviii, xxxix.*

Date.

The date of this prophecy concerning the nations and the judgment to which they will be brought is very uncertain. It seems to have little connection with the preceding context, which we studied in the previous section. Nevertheless, the prophet gives us no hint of time in the transition; and even if taken with the foregoing chapter, the date would still be unknown.

Content.

These two chapters contain a prophecy of the overthrow of certain nations represented as allied together for an invasion into the land of Israel. The exiles after their return to their land are to become so wealthy that their possessions will be a prize much sought by the most distant peoples, who will come with a great host of warriors to overflow the country of Palestine and gather up its wealth as spoils to be carried away. The leader of these foreign nations is to be Gog,* who is further described as the chief prince of Meshech

*Gog is believed to be the same as Gugu on the Assyrian monuments, the Gyges of Greek literature, an early king of Lydia in Asia Minor. Magog (Gen. 10:2) was probably a land and people in the region of the Caucasus, generally supposed to be the Scythians. Rosh was not likely

and Tubal. Allied with these are Gomer and the people of Togarmah, all in the distant north; and from the south and east, Persia, Cush and Put. These are evidently selected nations, very far removed from the Israelites, and such as may be presumed hostile to Jehovah, and representative of the heathen world.

Object.

The oncoming of the invaders will be like a storm, and they will cover the land like a cloud. Their object is to attack a land that is unwallled, quiet and defenceless, and where much wealth will reward the captors; but Jehovah's object is to manifest His supremacy by the utter rout and downfall of these nations, and that without human help. They will become affrighted, turn every man against his fellow, and they that flee will be overtaken by pestilence, hailstones, fire and brimstone. Thus Jehovah will make Himself known among the nations; for the victory shall be so great that the weapons of the fallen will serve Israel for fuel seven years, and it will require seven months to bury the dead bodies. But lest the land be defiled with the dead, buriers will be appointed to go through the land and search for every bone of the invaders till not one remains, and all the bodies shall be buried in a valley beyond the Jordan outside of the sacred territory.

Special Purpose.

The prophecy implies that both Israel and the nations charged the captivity of the Hebrews to the weakness of Jehovah in comparison with other gods; and the leading purpose of the prediction is to signify that Jehovah will certainly vindicate His own reputation among men. He will show that He alone can smite down the greatest aggregation of warriors on earth, and that in Palestine where Israel was captured. He wishes Israel and the nations near to her to understand that the taunts against Jehovah when Jerusalem fell under the Babylonians and all the unbelief in the

the land Rash on the borders of Elam (Delitzsch), since that is too remote from Lydia; but as the word means "head," it should probably be regarded as a common noun, "chief," as in R. V. Margin. Meshech is undoubtedly the Moschi east of the Black Sea; and Tubal is identified with the Tibareni in the same region. Sayce suggests that when these northern tribes made an invasion into Asia Minor, they may have entered Syria also.

hearts of the exiles which now stands in the way of Israel's glorious restoration, are groundless and will meet rebuke. When that shall be done, all shall know that the Captivity was designed by Jehovah as a punishment for Israel's sin; and thus the righteousness of God will be demonstrated. All of these lessons are necessary to the great Messianic work of Israel, and especially to give all nations warning that they will no more escape the judgment of God than the Hebrews that were hurled into exile. All men everywhere must repent (cf. Acts 17:30).

13. *Israel's Ideal Future. Ezek. xl-xlvi.*

Contents.

These nine chapters form a concluding section of the book of Ezekiel, and depict in highly wrought imagery and with much exaggeration the future of the restored people, land, temple and worship. The prophecy is presented in the form of a vision which the prophet saw in the twenty-fifth year of his captivity, or about 574 B. C. He seems to be transported by the hand of Jehovah to the land of Palestine, to be placed on the sacred mountain, where he is shown the temple, is told its measurements with great minuteness, sees the glory of Jehovah filling the house, learns the regulations concerning the priests and the prince with all matters pertaining to offerings and gifts, beholds a river flowing from the temple eastward with increasing depth till it reaches the sea of Arabah, and is informed concerning the division of the land among the twelve tribes and the gates of the city named respectively for the tribes.

Purpose.

It is notable that the secular interests of the future nation are not pictured in these scenes. The aim is not to foretell what Israel actually will be, nor how great as a nation she might become; but the aim is to portray the religious ideal of the people, especially in such a way as to make the religion of Jehovah attractive to the Hebrews. Not the possible wealth, not the political importance, nor the military greatness of the nation is described, since none of these were primarily significant with the prophet; for it is his purpose (1) to encourage the exiles to the service of Jehovah without which the nation has no prospect whatever, (2) to teach them that sin is their ruin and righteousness their only hope, (3) to elevate

their ideas of worship in accord with a more elevated conception of God, and (4) to point Israel to her high destiny in the Messianic purpose of Jehovah.

**Not an
Allegory.**

While the prophet is not describing what will literally occur, much less what did occur under Zerubbabel when the people returned to Palestine, he likewise does not present an extended allegory to exhibit a state of spiritual perfection in the Christian age. The interpreter has some temptation to regard the perfections of the temple as symbolizing the ideal church, the presence of Jehovah as the indwelling Spirit, the duties and privileges of priests and Levites as the work and worship of Christian believers, and the distribution of the land as the reward of the saints in light; but there is not the slightest hint that such is his meaning, or even that the prophet in this vision foresaw the things that belong to the Messianic time. On the other hand, the very details suggest that he depicts what was real to him and what might be realized by the people.

**An Ideal
Picture.**

It may be observed that the prophet does not consider that he is mingling the natural with supernatural elements in a manner that mocks ordinary credulity. He represents the temple situated on a "very high mountain," whereas Moriah is not such; he describes a river flowing from the temple to the Dead Sea, giving life in the waters of that sea in which no fishes can survive; and he has on either bank of the river evergreen trees bearing all kinds of fruit monthly; and yet men still live in the flesh, still spread nets for fishes, still divide inheritances, and are still to permit strangers and their children to sojourn in their midst. The prophet does not consider all this incongruous, as it now seems to most of his readers. In fact, he tacitly counts on the power of Jehovah as sufficient and available for any blessing to His people. He is sketching an ideal, prophetic and poetic, and it does not matter whether it be natural, supernatural, or a combination of the two. He is not writing history in advance, as some imagine, either literally or allegorically; but he is drawing an imaginary and ideal picture of what Jehovah can provide for Israel and what Israel can do for Jehovah. He is impressing the mind of

the exiles with the greatness and sanctity of their God whom they have neglected, and with the magnificence of the service which is due to Him. All Israel, in large numbers from every tribe, should rejoice to divide the land among them again, should make the most careful provision to maintain the sacredness of Jehovah's house and worship, so that the Holy Presence may forever abide in their midst.

Messianic.

Such a prophetic effort is highly Messianic, not that it delineates events of the later period, not that it mentions the Messiah, nor even that it offers a single symbol designed to prefigure any Christian person or institution, but much more that it seeks, like John the Baptist, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord, by teaching them the holiness of God, the necessity of righteousness, the value of His presence with men and the rich rewards of service duly rendered to Him. It does not require either history or literal prediction to convey such lessons; for it may be done as well by story, or parable, or poem, or imaginative prophecy. The all-important message, not of Ezekiel only, but of the whole Bible, and that which must be made to resound among all the habitations of men, is exactly that which is summed up in this prophet's closing words and set as the name of the sacred city, "*Jehovah is There.*"

CHAPTER VIII.

UNDATED PROPHECIES.

Historical Environment.

The dates of composition of some important prophecies in Isaiah, Obadiah, Joel and certain Psalms of similar thought cannot now be certainly ascertained even by the most acute critical inquiry. While this may be regarded as a misfortune in a historical interpretation, yet the disappointment is partly averted by the fact that in most cases at least the conditions for which the prophecy was uttered are in some measure apparent from the text itself. Some difficulties might be removed by a knowledge of the exact time of an oracle which could not be dissolved by any other information; but usually the chief import of a message may be discerned if only the leading circumstances of the prophet or his people can be determined. In many passages the Messianic value might have been wholly preserved; nevertheless, in most of the prophecies that will be treated in this section the general conditions of the author's time are sufficiently known to make apparent the more valuable Messianic bearings.

The Element of Criticism.

The greater part of the prophecy to be considered in this connection is found in those portions of the book of Isaiah concerning which the battle of modern criticism has been most warmly waged, and in which unanimity of opinion has not yet been reached. It is not the purpose of this work to canvass the ground of this contest, but rather to assume that which is most generally conceded, and interpret accordingly; but where this cannot be done, and two or more interpretations are possible, it seems best to state each side carefully and fairly. It may be noted that fortunately both conservative and progressive critics agree that whether this

material was composed before or after the beginning of the Babylonian Exile, it was written with reference to exilic conditions. This simplifies matters very much, and affords almost a common ground on which to study the Messianic character of these important utterances.

Classification of Material. Since in these passages the time element is no longer in the foreground, a subdivision of the material may be made on the basis of the general character of the prophecies. We discover that with a remarkable degree of distinctness the passages are divisible into those which describe the doom of nations or peoples, those which give the experiences of a sufferer, those which present the Servant of Jehovah, those which make a call to reformation, and those which announce the restoration of Israel to their former home in Canaan. By following this arrangement the relation of similar passages will the more readily appear, and the manner in which one utterance supplements another will be more transparent.

Section I. Prophecies of Doom.

1. *The Doom of Babylon. Isa. xiii. 2—xiv. 23.*

Two Poems. This prophecy is composed of two poems, one is a prediction of the fall of the city of Babylon, 13:2-14:2, and the other is a song of triumph over the king of Babylon, 14:4-23. The latter is introduced by a brief statement in prose, 14:3, 4. The first poem opens with a dramatic mustering of the army that is to overthrow the city, represented as the host of Jehovah's warriors assembling in the mountains of Media (13:2-5); then is announced the day of Jehovah when He will take vengeance on Babylon, and the scene of the fall is sketched (6-16); next follows a clear statement of the people to whom the poem alludes, the Medes are the attacking party, and Babylon is the object of the divine wrath, a city doomed to perpetual desolation (17-22); lastly the reason for the overthrow is that Jehovah will have mercy on Israel that has suffered under Babylonian oppression (14:1, 2). The poem may be thus translated and arranged:

Upon a bare mountain set ye up an ensign,
Lift up a voice to them, wave a hand,
That they may go into the gates of the nobles.
I have commanded my consecrated ones,
Yea, I have called my mighty men for mine anger,
Even my proudly exulting ones.

Hark! a tumult upon the mountains as of a great people!
Hark! an uproar of kingdoms of nations gathered together!
Jehovah of hosts is mustering the host for the battle.
They come from a far country, from the end of the heavens,
Even Jehovah and the weapons of his indignation,
To lay waste all the land.

Howl, for near is the day of Jehovah;
As destruction from the Almighty it shall come.
Therefore shall all hands be feeble,
And every heart of man shall melt;
And they shall be dismayed;
Pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them;
As a woman in travail, shall they be in pain;
Each in amazement shall behold another;
Their faces shall be faces of flame.

Behold, the day of Jehovah cometh,
Cruel, with wrath and fierce anger,
To make the land a desolation,
And to destroy the sinners thereof out of it.
For the stars of heaven and its constellations shall not give their light;
The sun shall be darkened in its going forth,
And the moon shall not cause its light to shine.
And I will visit evil upon the world,
And upon the wicked their iniquity;
And I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease,
And I will humble the haughtiness of the terrible.
I will make a man more rare than fine gold,
Even a man than the pure gold of Ophir.

Therefore will I make the heavens to tremble,
And the earth shall be shaken out of her place,
In the wrath of Jehovah of hosts
And in the day of the fierceness of his anger.
And it shall be that, as a gazelle that is chased,
And as a flock with no one to gather it,
They shall turn every man to his own people,
And flee every one to his own land.
Every one that is found shall be thrust through,
And every one that is taken shall fall by the sword.
Their infants also shall be dashed down before their eyes;
Their houses shall be rifled, and their wives ravished.

Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them,
 Who esteem not silver, and delight not in gold.
 Their bows shall dash down young men,
 And the fruit of the womb they shall not pity,
 And their eye shall not spare children,

And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms,
 The beauty of the Chaldeans' pride,
 Shall be as God's overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah.
 It shall never be inhabited,
 Nor shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation;
 Neither shall the Arabian pitch his tent there,
 Nor shall shepherds make their flocks to lie down there;
 But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there,
 And their houses shall be full of doleful creatures;
 And ostriches shall dwell there,
 And wild goats shall dance there;
 And wolves shall howl in their castles,
 And jackals in the pleasant palaces:
 And her time has nearly come,
 And her days shall not be prolonged.

For Jehovah will have compassion on Jacob,
 And will yet choose Israel,
 And set them in their own land;
 And the sojourner shall join himself with them,
 And they shall cleave to the house of Jacob.
 And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place,
 And the house of Israel shall possess them in Jehovah's land,
 For servants and for handmaids;
 And they shall take captive those that take them captive,
 And they shall rule over their oppressors.

**The Second
 Poem.**

The second poem, the Song of Triumph over the King of Babylon, has an introduction in prose, and consists of five strophes: the first strophe is a sigh of relief that the world's oppressor is gone, the second represents Sheol as troubled that he is coming thither, the third recalls his vain boasts of exaltation before he fell, the fourth magnifies his degradation by the fact that his body is thrown away without burial, and the fifth predicts an exterminating curse on his posterity.

(Introduction addressed to Israel.)

And it shall come to pass in the day that Jehovah shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy trouble, and from the hard service wherein thou wast made to serve, that thou shalt take up this parable against the king of Babylon, and say,

How hath the oppressor ceased,—ceased is the insolent rage!
 Jehovah has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of the rulers;
 That struck the peoples in anger,—with incessant stroke;
 That ruled the nations in wrath,—with unrelenting rule.
 The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing.
 Yea, the fir-trees rejoice over thee, the cedars of Lebanon, (saying)
 Since thou art laid low, no hewer is come up against us.

Sheol beneath is moved at thee, to meet thy coming;
 It stirreth up the shades for thee, even all the he-goats of the earth;
 It hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.
 They all shall answer and say unto thee,
 Art thou also weak as we? Art thou become like unto us?
 Reduced to Sheol is thy pomp, the noise of thy viols:
 Under thee maggots are spread, and worms cover thee.

How thou are fallen from heaven, O day-star, son of the morning!
 How thou art cut down to the ground, that didst lay the nations low!
 And it is thou that saidst in thy heart, I will ascend the heavens,
 I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;
 And I will sit on the mount of congregation, in the uttermost north;
 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
 I will make myself like the Most High:
 Yet thou art cast down to Sheol, to the uttermost pit.

They that see thee shall gaze at thee, they shall consider thee, (saying)
 "Is this the man that made the earth tremble, that made kingdoms quake;
 That made the world a wilderness, and overthrew its cities;
 That released not his prisoners to their home?"
 All the kings of the nations, all of them,
 Sleep in glory, every one in his own house;
 But thou art cast forth away from thy sepulcher as an abominable branch,
 Covered with the slain, that are thrust through with the sword,
 That go down to the stones of the pit as a carcass trodden under foot.

Thou shall not be joined with them in burial,
 Because thou hast destroyed thy land, thou hast slain thy people;
 The seed of evil doers shall not be named for ever.
 Prepare for his sons a place of slaughter for the iniquity of their fathers,
 That go down to the stones of the pit as a carcass trodden under foot.
 And fill the face of the world with cities.

To the foregoing dirge is appended an Epilogue explaining
 that this is Jehovah's doing, and that He will make it complete.
 It is as follows:

And I will rise up against them, saith Jehovah of hosts,
 And cut off from Babylon name and remnant,
 And progeny and offspring, saith Jehovah.
 I will also make it a possession for the porcupine and pools of water.
 And I will sweep it with a sweeping of destruction, saith Jehovah of hosts.

**Historical
Conditions.**

An understanding of these poems is possible only by a consideration of the international conditions at the time of Babylon's supremacy, the character and disposition of the Babylonian king, and the bearings of all of those upon the people and purposes of Jehovah. The Babylonians had conquered many nations, had carried away their wealth, had rendered their people captives and given them no hope of ever securing a release. Babylon was to the nations a robber and a taskmaster, a cruel murderer and a constant oppressor. All the nations longed for her fall; and the Hebrew prophet in particular, because he believed in the justice of Jehovah, looked for a full and speedy retribution. In the description of the nation and its ruler in these poems a strictly historical character is portrayed. The allusions to "iniquity," "haughtiness," "arrogance," "Babylon the glory of kingdoms and beauty of the Chaldeans' pride," "the oppressor," "the man that made the earth tremble and kingdoms quake," "that made the world a wilderness," "that released not prisoners to return home," are all faithful to the facts, and the persons are justly condemned as worthy of the severest punishment.

**Relation of
Babylon
to Judah.**

The relation of Babylon to Jehovah's people will be seen by the following facts; Judah had been tributary to Assyria; and when Pharaoh Necho of Egypt marched through Palestine to attack Assyria, Josiah vainly tried to check his advance, and lost his life in the battle of Megiddo about 609 B. C. This brought Judah under Egypt; and after a reign of three months, the new king Jehoahaz, unfaithful to Pharaoh, was deposed and sent to Egypt, while his place was given to his brother Jehoiakim, 608 B. C. Pharaoh Necho was about to go on against Assyria; but hearing that Nineveh was attacked by the Medes and Babylonians, he waited for the result at Riblah, in northern Syria. When Nineveh fell, 606 B. C., Pharaoh had a new enemy to meet, the young Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon; and the battle which was fought at Charchemish on the Euphrates, 605 B. C., issued in Pharaoh's defeat and a westward march of the forces of Nebuchadnezzar. Jehoiakim, being regarded as a vassal of Egypt, was bound ready to be carried to Babylon, and the temple of

Jerusalem was pillaged; but at this juncture the death of Nebuchadnezzar's father, with whom he was reigning jointly, called the warrior king to Babylon to care for his royal interests, and Jehoiakim was permitted to reign three years longer. He was removed for rebellion; and his son Jehoiakin reigned three months and ten days, when his unfaithfulness brought Nebuchadnezzar and his army against Jerusalem with the result that the king was taken a prisoner to Babylon with about 10,000 of his chief supporters and all the spoils of the temple, about 599 B. C. This disaster was worse than repeated in 588, when Zedekiah rebelled trusting to Egypt for assistance; for the Egyptians were defeated, Jerusalem was captured, the king taken, his sons slain, the city devastated and the people carried away into a miserable captivity.* The cruelties of this campaign were never forgotten by the Jews; and the merciless character of the Babylonians marked them as a sure target for the unerring justice of Jehovah. God had punished faithless Judah by Babylon; now Babylon, much worse, must be wiped out forever.

**Why Babylon
in Prophecy?**

But why a prophecy of Babylon's destruction? The divine oversight of the nations is exercised over many peoples that are not mentioned in prophecy, and may be assumed for every people whether thus noticed or not. It is certain that Hebrew prophets do not forecast the doom of each particular nation, and especially of those outside of their acquaintance, though they may be included sometimes in such comprehensive terms as "all nations," "all the earth," "the whole world," etc.; but why is Babylon, along with a few others, severely threatened with ruin while many nations are not mentioned at all? This is not explained (a) by the merely natural and human trait of the prophet to be interested only in that which comes under his immediate observation, nor (b) by his prejudice against those who are his national enemies, nor yet (c) by his desire to be popular with his countrymen; for

*For account of Pharaoh Necho, see I. Kings 23:29-34; of Jehoiachin, I. Kings 24:10-16; of Zedekiah, I Kings 25:1-21; Jer. 52:1-16.

none of these solutions takes into account the data,* as a scientific interpretation requires. The prophet himself, laying aside all prejudices and speaking in opposition to the popular sentiment which was non-Jehovistic, explains his message, "For Jehovah will have compassion on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel." This is the keystone of the whole arch of facts involved. This one truth has stood paramount from the call of Abraham to the present day. Disregard it, and the preparation for Christ in the legal and prophetic literature of the Old Testament is inexplicable, the Messianic foresight of the Hebrew prophets is an insoluble puzzle, and the long continued religious greatness of the people of Israel issuing in the supreme product of christianity is the culmination of mysteries.

The Answer The true answer, that Jehovah has chosen
Prophetic. Israel, places this prediction where it belongs as a stone in the great prophetic building, which was not, as some imagine, a preparatory structure erected hundreds of years in advance of any need for it, but rather, like a school, designed to make ready a people for a worthy future. Jehovah chose Israel to act as His agent in the redemption of man through Christ, and the preparation for this office was eminently worthy of any supernatural enlightenment of the prophets that might be necessary to its accomplishment. It was no natural prevision that enabled the prophet constantly, even under the most adverse circumstances, to direct his messages toward this far off future; and yet in this doom of Babylon the divine purpose and plan are as clear to his eye as in any of the remarkable utterances that precede it or follow it. This prediction, besides teaching the principles of national retribution and divine justice, proclaims God's intent to remove the nation that threatens forever to hold the chosen people in captivity, and to raise up a people that will return them to their land (Isa. 14:1), which was neces-

*The truth is, the Hebrew prophets again and again predict the success of their national enemies over their own people, not out of favor toward an enemy or disloyalty to their own nation, but as a visitation of divine justice upon those in whom the prophets have deepest concern. The doom prophecy is but the announcement of like justice upon such enemies.

sary to their training and task. Babylon would never release the imprisoned nation of Israelites, but the people by whom Babylon was to be overthrown would be differently disposed. Thus was to be secured a double purpose, justice and the deliverance of Israel. If God had interposed no more in favor of Israel than of other nations, and all their ideas of divine choice had been only a dream, no adequate explanation of Israel's return to her land while other nations perished in Babylonia and of her subsequent religious pre-éminence, could be given.

2. *Miscellaneous Oracles.*

Introductory. The book of Isaiah contains a collection of doom prophecies following that against Babylon; but many of them are very brief, and are doubtless only fragments of the original prophecies. The dates of some of these are given (14:28; 20:1, 2); but concerning others much uncertainty exists, and the Isaian authorship of some of them is strongly contested by many scholars. We have no means of knowing whether these announcements were sent to the several nations concerned, as the message of Jonah was said to have been delivered at Nineveh, or like many others, proclaimed only to Israel. Most of them have very few Messianic elements, although all of them bear on the choice of Israel by Jehovah as does the dirge of Babylon. Two passages of the group (18:7; 19:19-25) have been already studied.*

Against Assyria. A brief fragment concerning Assyria closely follows the oracle against Babylon, and without introduction or date. It seems to most scholars improbable that Isaiah would first predict the downfall of Babylon and then a defeat of Assyria in the order of the text, when Assyria must certainly be overthrown before Babylon could come to power. It seems to follow that these oracles are not arranged in the order of production. This utterance reads as follows:

*See pages 171-174. These passages are treated in that connection, because of their intimate relation to other prophecies of the Isaian period.

Jehovah of hosts hath sworn, saying,

Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass;
And as I have purposed, so shall it stand:
That I will break the Assyrian in my land,
And upon my mountains tread him under foot;
Then shall his yoke depart from off them,
And his burden depart from off their shoulder.

This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth,
And this is the hand that is stretched out upon all nations.
For Jehovah of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it?
And his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

—Isa. 14:24-27.

**Messianic
Value.**

This implies that the Assyrians at the time of the oracle had sovereignty over Israel or Judah, that their rule was oppressive, and that they must meet with defeat in Palestine. Clearly the lesson for Israel is, that Jehovah will defend His people and maintain the honor of His own name by the discomfiture of the enemy in His own land. This is not a prophecy of the fall of Assyria, but of some such defeat as that of Sennacherib in Judah (Isa. 37:36, 37). Jehovah's purpose is Messianic, since it includes the whole earth and cannot be withstood.

**Against
Philistia.**

This prophecy is dated "in the year that king Ahaz died," which was about 727 B. C. The occasion seems to be the visit of "messengers" of some nation, presumably Philistia, seeking an "answer" on some international question. At this time the Palestinian nations were under the yoke of Assyria; hence it is probable that the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III. had just died (which occurred in 727), that Philistia thought it an opportune time to make an allied effort to secure independence, and that proposals were being submitted to Judah to enter the alliance. Such combinations for liberty were usual on the death of Assyrian monarchs, and certainly took place about this time in Northern Israel, leading to the downfall of Samaria in 722. The following is the prophecy:

In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden:

Rejoice not, O Philistia, all of thee,
Because the rod that smote thee is broken;

For out of the serpent's root shall come forth an adder,
 And his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent.
 And the first-born of the poor shall feed,
 And the needy shall lie down in safety;
 And I will kill thy root with famine,
 And thy remnant shall be slain.

Howl, O gate! Cry, O city!
 Thou art melted away, O Philistia, all of thee;
 For from the north cometh a smoke,
 And there is no straggler in his ranks.

What then shall one answer the messengers of the nation?

That Jehovah hath founded Zion,
 And in her shall the afflicted of his people take refuge.
 —Isa. 14:28-32.

**The
Thought.**

The prophet advises Philistia not to rejoice at the monarch's death; for his successor will be as much worse than he as an adder is worse than a common serpent.* Nevertheless as for Judah's "poor" and "needy," on whose behalf the messengers probably make a pathetic plea, they will be well fed and safe. But Philistia, that wishes to rebel, shall be wasted with famine and slaughter, and Jehovah will bring this about through the well-trained army "from the north." The answer to the messengers, therefore, will be, that Jehovah has established Zion, and her afflicted people can trust Him for safety. This means, in brief, that Judah will not enter the alliance; and the reason is, that Jehovah is her perpetual and invincible Protector.

*Driver (Life and Times of Isaiah, p. 87) says, "The prophecy belongs, in all probability to 705 or 704 B. C., Sargon being the 'snake,' and Sennacherib the more terrible 'serpent flying about.' The Philistines might well feel elated upon receiving news of the murder of Sargon, who had ruinously defeated Hanno of Gaza, at Raphia, in 720, and had captured Ashdod in 711." This unnecessarily sets aside the title of this oracle which dates it "in the year that king Ahaz died." It is true that Sargon was a dreaded foe to the Philistines; but it is equally certain that Tiglath-Pileser III. in 734 conquered the Philistine cities Ekron, Ashdod and Ashkelon, and that he plundered Gaza. He was the first to undertake the reduction of all Western Asia into a single empire; and in 728, just before his death, he completed his ambitious task by receiving "from the hand of Bel" the crown of Babylon.

Against
Moab.

A more lengthy oracle against Moab (Isa. 15:1-16:12) consists mainly of the names of cities that shall be wasted and descriptions of the weeping and wailing that shall abound. The following extracts are specially significant:

Send ye the lambs for the ruler of the land,
From Sela desertward unto the mount of the daughter of Zion;
For it shall be that, as wandering birds, as a scattered nest,
So shall Moab's daughters be at the fords of the Arnon.
Give counsel, execute justice;
Make thy shade as the night in the midst of noonday;
Hide the outcasts, betray not the fugitive.
Let mine outcasts dwell with thee;
As for Moab, be thou a covert to him from the face of the destroyer.
For the extortioner is brought to nought, destruction ceaseth,
Oppressors are consumed out of the land.
And a throne shall be established in loving-kindness,
And there shall sit upon it in truth in the tent of David,
One judging and seeking justice, and skilled in righteousness,
And when Moab appears, wearies himself upon the high place,
And enters his sanctuary to pray, he shall prevail nothing.

—Isa. 16:1-5, 12.

The sending of lambs signifies the tribute which Moab will pay to Judah; and Judah in turn will kindly receive the fugitives of Moab when their homes shall be destroyed, which implies that Judah will not be the destroyer. The throne in the tent of David clearly suggests the final supremacy of the Davidic king over Moab, and he will show lovingkindness to the outcasts of the unfortunate people in marked contrast with the spirit which Moab has usually shown toward Israel. The idolatry of Moab will fail, which implies that he will learn to serve Jehovah. This brings the prophecy to the same end as many others which look to the universal and righteous dominion of the descendants of David and the world-wide service of Jehovah.* A very similar

*Appended to this oracle is the following: "This is the word that Jehovah spake concerning Moab in time past; but now Jehovah hath spoken, saying, Within three years as the years of a hireling the glory of Moab shall be brought into contempt, with all his great multitude, and the remnant shall be very small and of no account." This asserts that the preceding prophecy was earlier, but gives no limit as to date or authorship. Hitzig and others suggest that the disaster to Moab was the work of Jeroboam II., and the main oracle was written by Jonah (2 Ki. 14:25); but Delitzsch points out numerous Isaian marks

utterance concerning Moab is found in Jer. xlviii, with a like Messianic drift.

**Against
Damascus and
Ephraim.**

The next oracle, directed against Damascus and the land of Syria, includes also a prediction concerning Northern Israel, here called Ephraim.

That this was written by Isaiah is generally conceded; for in addition to the similarity of style with writings acknowledged to be his, the prophecy has a natural historical connection with ch. vii and ix. 8—x. 4. The conjunction of Ephraim and Syria in the prediction implies their confederacy as in the days of Ahaz (ch. vii), when Northern Israel and Damascus formed an alliance against Tiglath-Pileser III. of Assyria and tried to force Judah to join with them. There is here notably a silence concerning any threat of hostilities against Judah, which points to a time somewhat earlier than that of ch. vii, probably about the beginning of the coalition, 735 B. C., certainly before the Assyrian conquest of Damascus in 732, when the alliance was broken down.* The passage as follows bears no date, but has the title, "The Burden of Damascus:"

Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city,
And it shall be a ruinous heap.
Forsaken are the cities of Aroer;
They shall be for flocks,
That shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid.
Also the fortress shall cease from Ephraim,
And the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria;
They shall be as the glory of the children of Israel, saith Jehovah of hosts.

of style and thought, and regards the appendix a later addition when Isaiah saw the ruin of Moab more imminent. The time of this devastation is uncertain. The Assyrian monuments inform us that Moab united with Philistia, Judah and Edom in revolt against Sargon II. of Assyria, relying on Egypt for help. Sargon defeated Egypt, took Ashdod of Philistia into captivity, and quelled the rebellion about 711 B. C. (See Schrader's Assyrian Texts, II p. 64); but Sargon does not relate an invasion of Moab. Other Assyrian kings, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal, received tribute from Moab, but do not describe a raid in that land; yet it may have occurred, since their annals are fragmentary. Moab lost its national power under Nebuchadnezzar, and reference to Moabites after the Exile relate only to individuals or to the Arabs that possessed their land.

*It was in 734 that Tiglath-Pileser III., responding to the invitation of Ahaz, attacked Rezin of Syria and Pekah of Samaria. Rezin

And in that day it shall come to pass,
 That the glory of Jacob shall be made thin,
 And the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean.
 And it shall be as when a harvestman gathers the grain,
 And his arm reaps the ears;
 Yea, it shall be as when one gleans ears in the valley of Rephaim.
 Yet there shall be left therein gleanings, as the shaking of an olive-tree,
 Two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough,
 Four or five in the outmost branches of a fruitful tree,
 saith Jehovah, the God of Israel.

In that day shall men look unto their Maker,
 And their eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel.
 And they shall not look to the altars the work of their hands;
 Neither shall they have respect to that which their fingers have made,
 Either the Asherim, or the sun-images.

In that day shall their strong cities be
 As the forsaken places in the wood and on the mountain-top,
 Which were forsaken from before the children of Israel;
 And it shall be a desolation.
 For thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation,
 And hast not been mindful of the Rock of thy strength;
 Therefore thou plantest pleasant plants, and settest it with strange slips.
 In the day of thy planting thou hedgest it in,
 And in the morning thou makest thy seed to blossom;
 But the harvest fleeth away in the day of grief and sore anguish.
 —Isa. 17:1-11.

Significance. The prophecy foretells the ruin of Damascus which served as a fortress to Ephraim," because it was an allied stronghold much nearer the enemy, the Assyrians; includes the fall of Northern Israel, as grain in harvest till there be only "gleanings" of population left; predicts that Israel will then remember Jehovah whom they have forsaken; and explains that it is on account of their defection from Him that the desolation is coming. The value of the prophecy is primarily, that it is a warning that the alliance of Syria and Israel against Assyria will fail. It is intended to prevent Judah from entering the conspiracy, and it is also an admonition against turning from Jehovah to the worship of idols. The sal-

was defeated in battle, and fled to Damascus, which was immediately besieged; but a portion of the Assyrian army moved on westward devastating Galilee and other provinces. Damascus fell in 732. The campaign closed with a court held at Damascus which nearly a score of subjected princes, including Ahaz (called on the inscriptions Jehoahaz), were required to attend.

vation of Judah from the destructive league of the other nations and from the fatal error of forsaking Jehovah are undoubtedly the chief and highest interests of the prediction.

Against the Assyrians. An abrupt turn of the prophecy occurs at Isa. 17:12, and the rest of the chapter seems to predict some dire disaster to the Assyrians. The predictions are wholly irrelevant to Damascus and Ephraim which are the subjects of the previous verses; and no connection with the following chapter is discernible. The passage is probably a fragment of a more complete poem, which may have been composed by Isaiah not long before Sennacherib's invasion into Judah, 701 B. C. Isa. xxxvii. Enough of the poem appears here to indicate that the impending event will prove a divine interposition in behalf of Judah. The fragment reads thus:

Ho! An uproar of many peoples,
That roar like the roaring of the seas; .
And the rushing of nations,
That rush like the rushing of mighty waters!
The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters:
But he shall rebuke them, and they shall flee afar,
And shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind,
And like the whirling dust before the storm.
At evening, behold, terror;
And before the morning they are not.
This is the portion of them that despoil us,
And the lot of them that rob us.

—Isa. 17:12-14.

The Meaning. The Assyrians always took with their own forces many soldiers gathered from among other nations which they had subdued; and thus "many peoples" rushed hither and thither through the countries which they invaded. The "rebuke" is to be administered by Jehovah, but the manner of it is indicated only by the "chasing as chaff before the wind," which implies a great defeat. The appearance of "terror" at evening and a disappearance of men before morning may rather poetically picture the suddenness of the overthrow than foretell a misfortune by night; yet we cannot resist comparing with this the record of Sennacherib's remarkable loss in Palestine at night. Isa. 37:36. The closing lines imply that a similar lot must fall to any that despoil or rob the people of Jehovah. Compare the ruin and rob-

bery which the Assyrians wrought in Israel, Isa. 10:6-13. Jehovah will punish such cruelty and inhumanity, and will defend His own purpose to save Israel. The Messianic value lies in this divine defense of Israel.

Chapter xviii is in many respects obscure, since it contains some doubtful Hebrew words and uncertain historical allusions. The clearest sense seems to be secured by understanding that Ethiopia has sent ambassadors to Judah to propose an alliance against Assyria, and that Isaiah advises the ambassadors to return to their people and watch for a signal that Jehovah has overthrown the Assyrians. The time was probably not long before Sennacherib's invasion into Judah (701 B. C.), when Tirhakah was king of Ethiopia; for Tirhakah was expected to help Judah against Sennacherib (Isa. 37:9). From this it seems that Isaiah's prophecy did not prevent Hezekiah the king of Judah from entering the alliance, in which also Egypt and Philistia were included. The strange disaster that befell Sennacherib's army (Isa. 37:36) brought a fulfilment of the prediction. The prophecy is a poem as follows:

Ha! The land of the rustling of wings,
Which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia;
Which sendeth out ambassadors on the sea,
Even in vessels of papyrus upon the waters, saying,
Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation tall and smooth,
To a people terrible from their beginning onward,
A nation that meteth out and treadeth down,
Whose land the rivers divide!
All ye inhabitants of the world, and ye dwellers on the earth,
When an ensign is lifted up on the mountains, behold;
And when the trumpet is blown, hearken.

For thus saith Jehovah unto me,
I will be still, and I will behold in my dwelling-place,
Like clear heat in sunshine,
Like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.
For before the harvest, when the blossom is over,
And the flower becomes a ripening grape,
He will cut off the sprigs with pruning-hooks,
And the spreading branches will he take away, cut down.
They shall be left together to the ravenous birds of the mountains,
And to the beasts of the earth;
And the ravenous birds shall summer upon them,

And all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.
 In that time shall a present be brought unto Jehovah of hosts,
 From a people tall and smooth,
 Even from a people terrible from their beginning onward,
 A nation that meets out and treads down,
 Whose land the rivers divide,
 To the place of the name of Jehovah of hosts, the mount Zion.

**Messianic
Character.**

The Messianic feature is, that all the world is called to note the trumpet sound that will announce the fall of Assyria, the representative enemy of Israel by the hand of Israel's God, Jehovah. The ambassadors may as well go home; for the alliance will be in vain, since it will not give honor to Jehovah, and it is He that will break the power of the oppressor. Compare with this the fact that it was after the allies had all failed to stand before Sennacherib, that Jehovah smote the army by night. The turning of Ethiopia to Jehovah (v. 7) has been already discussed.*

**Against
Egypt.**

Chapter xix of Isaiah has two distinct parts: vv. 1-17 contain a doom prophecy that may be appropriately considered in this group; but vv. 18-25 record a forecast of national conversion which has been considered in the prophecies of Isaiah's period. Whether the two passages were composed in their present connection, we do not know; for while they are utterly diverse in spirit, the despair in the one and the devotion in the other may have the relation of cause and effect.

**The Doom
Passage.**

The doom passage may be presented in the following semi-poetic form to show the parallelisms and perhaps hint to the reader the poetic unreality of the description:

Behold, Jehovah rideth upon a swift cloud,
 And cometh unto Egypt;
 And the idols of Egypt shall tremble at his presence,
 And the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it.
 And I will stir up the Egyptians against the Egyptians:

*See p. 171, where it is associated with the conversion of other nations. That prediction and this are not inconsistent; for this is not so much a prophecy against Ethiopia as against Assyria. The first word in the present passage is not "woe," as in A. V., but "ha," an appeal for attention.

And they shall fight every one against his brother,
 And every one against his neighbor;
 City against city, kingdom against kingdom.
 And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst of it,
 And I will defeat the counsel of it;
 And they shall seek unto the idols, and the charmers,
 And to them that have familiar spirits, and the wizards.
 And I will give over the Egyptians into the hand of a cruel lord;
 And a fierce king shall rule over them,
 Saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts.

And the waters shall fail from the sea,
 And the river shall be wasted and become dry.
 And the rivers shall become foul;
 The streams of Egypt shall be diminished and dried up;
 The reeds and flags shall wither away.
 The meadows by the Nile, by the brink of the Nile,
 And all the sown fields of the Nile, shall become dry,
 Shall be driven away, and be no more.
 And the fishers shall lament,
 And all that cast a hook into the Nile shall mourn,
 And they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish.
 Moreover they that work in combed flax,
 And they that weave white cloth, shall be ashamed.
 And the pillars of Egypt shall be broken in pieces;
 All they that work for hire, grieved in soul.

The princes of Zoan are utterly foolish;
 The counsel of the wisest counsellors of Pharaoh is become stupid.
 How say ye unto Pharaoh,
 I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings?
 Where then are thy wise men?
 And let them tell thee now
 And know what Jehovah of hosts hath purposed concerning Egypt.
 The princes of Zoan are deluded,
 The princes of Memphis are deceived;
 They have caused Egypt to go astray,
 That are the corner-stone of her castles.
 Jehovah hath mingled in her midst a spirit of perverseness,
 So that they have caused Egypt to go astray in every work of it,
 As a drunken man staggereth about in his vomit.
 Neither shall there be for Egypt any work,
 Which head or tail, palm-branch or rush, may do.

In that day shall the Egyptians be like unto women,
 And they shall tremble and fear,
 Because of the shaking of the hand of Jehovah of hosts,
 Which he shakes against them.
 And the land of Judah shall become a terror to Egypt;
 Every one to whom it is mentioned shall be afraid,
 Because of the purpose of Jehovah of hosts,
 Which he purposeth against it.

—Isa. 19:1-17.

The Leading Thought. Egypt as a heathen nation cannot stand; for Jehovah will bring upon it weakness, failure and terror. The idols will tremble, the warriors in confusion will fight with one another, the government will become a cruel despotism, drought and the consequent failure of the leading industries will bring despair, the counsellors with the stupidity of brutes will deceive the princes, and all Egypt like women in war shall be in a daze of dread. It will all be the work of Jehovah, who purposes to humble the pride of that idolatrous people, and manifest His own divine supremacy in the earth. In this purpose again is the Messianic bearing.

Its Fitness. This prophecy would well fit into the time when Hezekiah was making alliances with Egypt and other nations against Assyria;* for in describing the weakness of Egypt compared with Jehovah, Isaiah could show the folly of Judah's depending on Egypt for help and rejecting the vastly superior power of her own God. Judah ought to depend on Jehovah to deal with Assyria; for He is able, and has a great "purpose" which no nation nor league of nations can change or thwart.

Against Egypt Again. Chapter xx is a brief message concerning Egypt given by Isaiah when Sargon, king of Assyria, took Ashdod and severely punished its people for rebellion. Sargon's inscriptions inform us that in 711 B. C. he took Ashdod, which was then the chief center of the defection, that he deposed the king Azuri, who had persuaded Judah and other states to invite Egypt to aid them against Assyria, and that he appointed Akhimit, Azuri's brother, over the city. When the people displaced Akhimit with another traitor to Assyria, named Yaman, Sargon sent his chief officer (a *turtanu*) against Ashdod, captured the city, carried its people captive, and demanded and secured Yaman from the king

*This alliance brought on the invasion by Sennacherib 701 B. C. Isaiah informs us in the next chapter (see next paragraph below) that a similar coalition was made against Sargon, 711 B. C., and Sargon relates his vengeful victories against the allies. It is possible, as Prof. Cheyne has suggested, that the present text, 19:1-17, may have been uttered just before the defeat of Egypt by Sargon in 720.

of Meluhha, to whom he had fled for refuge. Judah at that time escaped punishment only because the Assyrians were hurried away by military demands elsewhere. The chapter reads thus:

"In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and took it; at that time Jehovah spake by Isaiah the son of Amos, saying, Go, and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins and put thy shoe off thy foot. And he did so, walking stripped and barefoot. And Jehovah said, Like as my servant Isaiah has walked stripped and barefoot three years for a sign and a wonder concerning Egypt and concerning Ethiopia; so shall the king of Assyria lead away the captives of Egypt, and the exiles of Ethiopia, young and old, stripped and barefoot and with bodies uncovered, to the shame of Egypt. And they shall be dismayed and confounded, because of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory. And the inhabitant of this coast-land shall say in that day, Behold, such is our expectation, whither we fled for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria! and we, how shall we escape?" Isa. xx.

The Meaning. Again the force of the prophecy is, mainly, that reliance on Egypt and Ethiopia will be disappointing; for the Assyrians will defeat both of them. The prophet was wearing sackcloth probably in evidence of his grief over the policy of the government which was entering a conspiracy to break its own oath of allegiance to Assyria. He is told to put off all his raiment but an under-garment, and go about robeless and barefoot as a sign that the Egyptians and Ethiopians will be defeated by Assyria, and be taken thus stripped into captivity. Then the nations that have depended on them shall be chagrined, and will be forced to face the question, "And we,—how shall we escape?" No doubt Isaiah at this time also urged that Judah should depend on Jehovah, who only was able to relieve her from the thralldom of Assyrian domination. Jehovah was too jealous for His own great Name and of Judah's devotion to allow Egypt and Ethiopia to carry off the honor of the deliverance. Such a loss of Judah's loyalty to God would impede the course of divine purposes with her in the future.

**Against
Babylon
Again.**

"The oracle of the Wilderness of the Sea" is the half concealed heading of a brief but remarkable prediction of the fall of Babylon. Isa. 21:1-10. The low plain of Babylon with its

canals and lakes of water, but half recovered from the Persian Gulf, might well be called a wilderness (desert) of the sea. The reference to Elam and Media as the besiegers makes it clear that the overthrow by Cyrus (B. C. 538) is meant,* and this suggests to many scholars that it is spoken by a prophet in the period of the Exile (599-536 B. C.), which finds some confirmation in the peculiar style of the utterance. The passage as follows is a mixture of prose and poetry, the poetical portions being the kernel of prophecy, while the prose parts are parenthetical explanations of the prophet's experiences:

As whirlwinds in the South sweep through,
It comes from the wilderness,
From a terrible land!

A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous man deals treacherously, and the destroyer destroys.

Go up, O Elam;
Besiege, O Media;
All the sighing thereof will I make to cease.

Therefore are my loins filled with anguish; pains have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman in travail: I am pained so that I cannot hear, I am dismayed so that I cannot see. My heart pants, horror has affrighted me: the twilight that I desired has been turned into trembling unto me.

They prepare the table,
They spread the carpets,
They eat, they drink:
Rise up, ye princes, anoint the shield.

For thus has the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman; let him

*Driver, following Cheyne and Kleinert, holds that this prophecy refers to a siege of Babylon by the Assyrians in Isaiah's own day, and that Elam and Media are only "contingents in the assailing army." He urges that Isaiah's generation would have little interest in an event so distant as Cyrus' conquest, and that it would afford no occasion for alarm to Isaiah as indicated in vv. 3, 4, 10. *Life and Times of Isa.*, pp. 96, 97. On this it must be said that probably neither the prophet nor his people knew how distant it would be; and, in fact, it was to be a matter of deep interest and great alarm, since when Cyrus' invasion should come, the prophet's people would be dwelling in the very land to be invaded. Certainly the omission of Assyria and the mention of "contingents" are very unsuitable to a prediction of an Assyrian conquest.

declare what he sees: and when he sees the troop, horsemen in pairs, a troop of asses, a troop of camels, he shall hearken diligently with much heed. And he cried as a lion:

O Lord, I stand continually upon the watch-tower in the day-time,
And am set in my ward whole nights:
And, behold, here comes a troop of men,
Horsemen in pairs.

And he answered and said,

Babylon is fallen, is fallen;
And all the graven images of her gods are broken unto the ground.

O thou my threshing, and the corn of my floor: that which I have heard from Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you."

**The National
Part.**

The prophet is here teaching that destruction will sweep through Babylon like whirlwinds in the South (the land just south of Judah, mostly a desert region); and it will come from a land where a warlike people dwell, but little known to the Hebrews, therefore called "a terrible land." Elam was long the enemy of Babylon and of Assyria before Persia was prominent in history. Persia is not mentioned in pre-exilic books of the Bible. The "sighing thereof" is the anguish which Babylon inflicted on the nations around her, and which Jehovah was bringing to an end. The revelling of the Babylonians is graphically portrayed: they are preparing tables, eating and drinking, when suddenly they are called to rise up and anoint the shield for battle.

**The
Divine Part.**

In the picturesque style of the prophet there appears in poetic representation a watchman appointed by Jehovah looking for Babylon's enemies coming in troops; and as soon as he sees the troops he announces the fall of the city. The secret of the utterance is, that "all the graven images of her gods are broken unto the ground;" and this signifies that while the Babylonians have boasted that their gods have overcome Jehovah, it is all untrue, and Jehovah will yet bring complete destruction to these divinities. Turning to the Jews, the prophet calls them his "threshing," and the "grain of his floor," because they had been

trodden down in the affliction of the exile. He declares that this message is from Jehovah.

**Against
Edom.**

As a watchman on guard at night, the prophet poetically hears one voice after another from Seir (another name for Edom) calling for the hour of the night. Edom, like Judah, was afflicted by the Babylonians, and the night of oppression seemed long; and "as a sick man longs for the end of a sleepless night, and is constantly inquiring about the time" (Delitzsch), so Edom looks to the prophet to know the signs of a better day. The answer "The morning is coming, and also the night," doubtless means that one oppression is about past, but another will quickly succeed it. When the Assyrians fell, the Babylonians rose; and after these the Persians, so that only a brief dawn of hope came as the rod of tyranny changed hands. The prophecy carries the title, "The Burden of Dumah," and reads as follows:

One calleth unto me out of Seir,
Watchman, what hour of the night?
Watchman, what hour of the night?

The watchman said,

The morning is come and also the night:
If ye will inquire, inquire;
Turn ye, come.

Isaiah xxi. 11, 12.

**Chief
Thought.**

Seir was an inveterate enemy of Jehovah and Judah; and the prophet is virtually predicting that the Edomites shall not again see the day of national liberty and greatness. By a slight change of the form Edom to Dumah, which means silence, he hints that the silence of national doom awaits the nation. If they wish to inquire further, they may come again and inquire, but for the present there is no hope. There can be no hope till they are ready to cease opposition to Jehovah, and "come again" in loyal service to him.

**Against
Arabia.**

"The Oracle of Arabia" in Isaiah 21:13-17, lays a scene in the wilderness of northern Arabia, in which the caravans of Dedanite mer-

chantmen have turned out of the regular roads from Damascus to Egypt through fear of being plundered by soldiers in a time of war; and now wandering without food or drink, they are supplied by the hospitality of the inhabitants of Tema. The time of the prophecy is unknown. It seems from the prediction that "within a year" Kedar should fail, that it was during some great military campaign like that of Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar or Cambyses. The passage follows:

In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge,
O ye caravans of Dedanites.
Unto him that was thirsty they brought water;
The inhabitants of the land of Tema met the fugitives with their bread;
For they fled away from the swords,
From the drawn sword, and from the bent bow,
And from the grievousness of war.

For thus hath the Lord said unto me, within a year, according to the years of a hireling, all the glory of Kedar shall fail; and the residue of the number of the archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be few; for Jehovah, the God of Israel, hath spoken it. Isa. xxi. 13-17.

Significance. The picture of distress and temporary relief is put as a hint that a war of desolation to Arabia has begun; and the prediction is then made bold that the defenders of the land will be cut off. This can mean nothing else than the downfall of the boasted strength of Arabia and the defeat of another nation that has mocked Jehovah and harassed His people.

Against Jerusalem. This prophecy, Isa. 22:1-14, is called the "Oracle of the Valley of Vision," probably because Jerusalem is called the "Valley of Vision," v. 5; for while it is situated on hills, it is almost surrounded by higher elevations, hence is comparatively a valley city, and it is the place of prophetic visions. Frequently it is the object of the vision, and is so in this case. The time is that of a siege of Jerusalem, probably by Sennacherib, 701 B. C., at a moment of temporary relief, perhaps when by Hezekiah's tribute the siege was raised. The people, regardless of their sins that brought on the siege, give way to festivities of a very tumultuous character; but Isaiah is grieved at their impenitence

and folly, and reminds them of their narrow escape and the certainty that they will die for their neglect of God. The utterance, as follows, is an address to the inhabitants of the city :

What aileth thee now,
That thou art wholly gone up to the housetops?
O thou that art full of shoutings,
A tumultuous city, a joyous town;
Thy slain are not slain with the sword,
Neither are they dead in battle.
All thy rulers fled away together,
They were bound by the archers;
All that were found of thee were bound together;
They had fled afar off.

Therefore said I, Look away from me, I will weep bitterly; labor not to comfort me for the destruction of the daughter of my people.

For it is a day of discomfiture,
And of treading down, and of perplexity,
From the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, in the valley of vision;
A breaking down of the walls, and a crying to the mountains.
And Elam bare the quiver, with chariots of men and horsemen;
And Kir uncovered the shield.
And it came to pass, that thy choicest valleys were full of chariots,
And the horsemen set themselves in array at the gate.
And he took away the covering of Judah;
And thou didst then look to the armor in the house of the forest.
And ye saw the breaches of the city of David, that they were many;
And ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool;
And ye numbered the houses of Jerusalem,
And ye brake down the houses to fortify the wall;
And made a reservoir between two walls for the water of the old pool.
But ye looked not unto him that had done this,
Neither had ye respect unto him that purposed it long ago.

And in that day did the Lord Jehovah of hosts call to weeping,
And to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth;
And, behold, joy and gladness,
Slaying oxen and killing sheep,
Eating flesh, and drinking wine:
Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die.
And Jehovah of hosts revealed himself in mine ears,
Surely this iniquity shall not be forgiven till ye die,
saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts.

**The
Accusation.**

Here the Prophet (1) accuses the people of reveling on the housetops, whence they beheld the retreating enemy; gives them his vision of

another siege and the capture of their fleeing princes; (2) recalls the straits through which they have just passed; (3) charges them with disregard of Jehovah, the real author of their troubles; and (4) announces Jehovah's call to penitence and threat of death for their iniquities. This prophecy is pathetic with the grief of its author, that the only people whom Jehovah has chosen should forsake Him, that they should be deaf to His pleadings and blind to His doings, and that thus by their obstinacy the gracious purposes of God should be imperiled. What less than death can they deserve? Here is unquestionably a Messianic crisis.

Against
Shebna.

Isaiah's only doom prophecy against an individual is that in 22:15-25, as follows:

“Thus saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, Go, get thee unto this treasurer, even unto Shebna, who is over the house, (and say)

What doest thou here? and whom hast thou here,
That thou hast hewed thee out here a sepulcher?
(Hewing him out a sepulcher on high,
Graving a habitation for himself in the rock!)
Behold, Jehovah, like a strong man, will hurl thee away violently;
Yea, he will wrap thee up closely.
He will surely wind thee round and round,
And toss thee like a ball into a large country;
There shalt thou die,
And there shall be the chariots of thy glory,
Thou shame of thy lord's house.
And I will thrust thee from thine office;
And from thy station shalt thou be pulled down.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah: and I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hands; and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; and he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a throne of glory to his father's house. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, every small vessel, from the cups even to all the flagons. In that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, shall the nail that was fastened in a sure place give way; and it shall be hewn down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off; for Jehovah hath spoken it.

Occasion. The treasurer was the official that had charge of the king's household, and was next to the king in power. It is not certain that Shebna was a foreigner unduly honored in Judah; but it is very probable that he opposed Isaiah's policy, and favored the Egyptian alliance, and that his reckless use of personal influence against a national loyalty to Jehovah was the reason for his removal. His arrogance was manifested also in his effort to prepare for himself a costly sepulchre and his disposition to ride in chariots of almost royal splendor. These undeserved privileges Jehovah would not permit him to enjoy; and Isaiah boldly announced to him that he should be thrust out of his office, and a faithful servant of Jehovah put into his place. This was actually done; for when Sennacherib's siege was imminent, Eliakim was in Shebna's position (Isa. 36:3).*

Responsibility. Isaiah presents a double forecast for Shebna's successor: (1) He shall be duly invested with Eliakim's power over the house of David by having charge of the royal family and the court; and in this position he shall have unlimited authority to be exercised for the good of all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. This implies that his influence in the government of the nation was to be all but supreme. That his office should be a great honor to his relatives, is implied in the prediction that he should "be for a throne of glory to his father's house." (2) His abuse of his power by putting into places of trust his kinsmen, great and small, without regard to their worthiness, shall prove an occasion of his downfall, as a tent-pin too heavily laden with vessels, good and bad, comes crashing to the ground. Thus Jehovah will exalt a man who will execute His pleasure, but will not permit an abuse of sacred trusts to meet the selfish ends of a motley company of court dependents.

*The facts that Eliakim is mentioned in the prophecy as the future overseer of the king's house, and that in 701 he is said to be in the office, suggest that this prophecy must have been uttered not long before that eventful year. It is worth noting that Shebna had enough of the king's confidence to be retained in another prominent office, that of Secretary (Isa. 63:3), even when by Isaiah's demand he had lost his former place.

Against
Tyre.

In chapter xxiii, Isaiah utters a doom prophecy against the city of Tyre. The passage is partly poetic and partly prose, as follows:

Howl ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste,
So that there is no house, no entering in:
From the land of Kittim it is revealed to them.
Be still, ye inhabitants of the coast,
Whom the merchants of Sidon, that traverse the sea, replenished.
And on great waters the seed of the Shihor,
The harvest of the Nile, was her revenue;
And she was the mart of nations.
Be thou ashamed, O Sidon, for the sea has spoken,
The stronghold of the sea, saying,
I have not travailed, nor brought forth,
Neither have I nourished young men, nor brought up virgins.
When the report cometh to Egypt,
They shall be sorely pained at the report of Tyre.
Pass ye over to Tarshish;
Wail, ye inhabitants of the coast.
Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days,
Whose feet carried her afar off to sojourn?

Who hath purposed this against Tyre, the bestower of crowns,
whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honorable of the earth? Jehovah of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory,
to bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth.

Pass through thy land as the Nile, O daughter of Tarshish;
There is no restraint any more.
He hath stretched out his hand over the sea,
He hath shaken the kingdoms;
Jehovah hath given commandment concerning Canaan,
To destroy the strongholds thereof.
And he said, Thou shalt no more rejoice,
O thou oppressed virgin daughter of Sidon:
Arise, pass over to Kittim;
Even there shalt thou have no rest.

Behold, the land of the Chaldeans: this people was not;
The Assyrian set it for them that dwell in the wilderness:
They set up their siege-towers;
They overthrew the palaces thereof;
They made it a ruin.
Howl, ye ships of Tarshish;
For your stronghold is laid waste.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king; after the end of seventy years it shall be unto Tyre as in the song of the harlot:

Take a harp, go about the city,
 Thou harlot that hast been forgotten;
 Make sweet melody, sing many songs,
 That thou mayest be remembered.

And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that Jehovah will visit Tyre, and she shall return to her hire, and shall play the harlot with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth. And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to Jehovah: it shall not be treasured up nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before Jehovah, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing.

Fall of Tyre.

Tyre was attacked by the Assyrian king Shalmanezzer IV, B. C. 726, who used a fleet of sixty vessels; but with twelve warships Tyre defeated the whole armada; but the siege lasted five years till the death of Shalmanezzer (Josephus Ant. ix. 14. 2). The next king, Sargon, does not record its capture. Phoenicia was invaded by Sennacherib, 701, and the country devastated: but the city is not mentioned. Assurbanipal took it by storm in 664, but did not destroy it. Nebuchadnezzar besieged it for thirteen years (Jos. Ant. x. 11, 1), but as Ezekiel implies (29:17-20), he did not take its plunder. The city was taken by Alexander, B. C. 332, and its people slain and sold into slavery; but in eighteen years it was sufficiently repeopled and fortified to withstand Antigonus. In Jerome's day it was "an emporium for the commerce of the whole world." Its fatal fall occurred in 1291 A. D., when the Saracens expelled the entire population. Since then it has been only a miserable Arab village.

Date of Prophecy.

The date of this oracle is uncertain, but the time of Shalmanezzer's siege of Tyre is generally regarded as the most appropriate occasion in Isaiah's day; but some have denied that Isaiah wrote it, because in v. 13 the Chaldeans are mentioned who did not attain supremacy till the fall of Ninevah, 606 B. C. The Chaldeans, however, were well known during the ministry of Isaiah. Their country was overrun; and the city of Babylon was entered by Sargon in 709, by Sennacherib in 703 and again in 696-5. The Hebrew text of v. 13 is probably corrupted by copyists, and the sense is very uncertain, making it a precarious ground of argu-

ment for the date of this prophecy; but the simplest meaning appears to be that the Chaldeans are no more, having been overthrown by the Assyrians, who have made their land a wilderness, and their fate is held up as a warning to the Tyrians, as that of No-Amon (Thebes) to the Ninevites (Nahum 3:8). The work of Sennacherib in Chaldea was so destructive that Isaiah in 701 might readily refer to it when Tyre was being threatened by the same monarch; and this is by no means an inappropriate time for this prediction.

**Points in the
Prophecy.**

The ships sent out to Tarshish (Tartessus in Spain), are told as they are returning by the people of Kittim (Cyprus), that their home city is destroyed, and they will find "no entering in" at their haven. All the nations of the Mediterranean coast with whom the Phoenicians traded are to "be still" with astonishment. Tyre had been a market for the grain of Shihor (Upper Nile), and the Lower Nile. But now comes a report from the sea, even from "the stronghold of the sea" herself (Tyre), that however many youths and maidens she had formerly borne, she is now as one that did not bear nor bring them up. Then arises the question, "Who has purposed this against Tyre?" The answer is, Jehovah has purposed it, to reduce the "pride of all glory, to bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth." So completely has Jehovah shaken the kingdoms, that the inhabitant of Tarshish, formerly a resident of Tyre, might pass through the old homelands without restraint, and that the remaining dweller of Tyre will not even find rest by fleeing to Cyprus. Jehovah has appointed seventy years for Tyre to be a waste, after which, like a deserted woman, she may again attract the world's attention.

**Prophetic
Value.**

Minute fulfillments are not to be expected in a poetic message. The imagery is used, not to give details of coming history, but to heighten the effect of the warning and draw attention to Jehovah. Even the seventy years of oblivion, v. 17, find no parallel in the history of Tyre, but help make the poetic picture in the prophecy more

vivid.* The main burden of the prophecy has been accomplished after long delay, and probably would have been verified immediately if Tyre had firmly adhered to the policy upon which the utterance was based. It is almost certain that Tyre adopted a political attitude toward Assyria similar to that of Judah when Isaiah rebuked and warned the court of Hezekiah and other nations in 701; and besides this, Tyre was guilty of a long cultivated, self-seeking, commercial spirit, which she constantly infused into her western colonies and other countries. Isaiah's chief desire is to see this sordidness and worldliness purged away, and the more philanthropic spirit of "them that dwell before Jehovah" prevail in the great emporium of the sea.

**Messianic
Optimism.**

While Isaiah preached against the commercialism of Tyre, and indeed sought perfect philanthropy in all nations, his insight into human affairs was clear and optimistic enough to recognize the good that commerce may do even if it remains the mercenary "harlot" that it has always been. It seems strange that he should call Tyre by the opprobrious name, "harlot," and yet say that "her hire shall be holiness unto Jehovah;" but his real meaning is, that along with all the faults of her commercial spirit and in spite of all the evils of selfish exchange, the conduct of trade relations with the various nations will serve at last a good end in the progress of Jehovah's cause. It has turned out true that the spirit of Tyre alive today among the nations is a means of international acquaintance, the spread of civilization and the more convenient proclamation of Christian truth. Isaiah would

*The reader will be interested in the words of Delitzsch (Commentary, Am. Ed. pp. 389, 390) respecting the seventy years and their sequel: "The reference to the seventy years is clear: the years are the seventy of the Chaldean dominion. And the real state of the case is, that the Tyre which rose again in the post-Chaldean period, and especially after its conquest by Alexander the Great 333 B. C., was no longer a political power, but only a great emporium. Even apart from this, there were preludes in the post-Chaldean period to what is foretold here. Such a prelude it was when Sidonians and Tyrians helped to build the temple in Jerusalem (Ezra iii. 7, cf. i. 4), and when, soon after apostolic activity began, a Christian Church arose in Tyre (Acts xxi. 3 f.). In this way the trade of Tyre passed into the service of the God of revelation."

not have commerce closed and ships dismantled, but would have them contribute to the advance of holiness and the service of Jehovah. Gradually the Christian age is bringing this to an accomplishment.

3. *General Judgment.*

Uncertainty of Date. Chapters xxiv-xxvii of Isaiah form a single piece of doom prophecy of a most remarkable literary character. The date is unknown, and the historical allusions are uncertain and conflicting. The mention of Assyria and Egypt (27:13) favors the time of Isaiah; and yet the allusion to exiles in the same verse seems to point to a much later date. The idolatry in Judah (27:9) seems early; but again the gathering of the children of Israel (27:12) seems late. Other critical materials are equally indecisive. Indeed, it seems clear that, although the writer had a historical situation in mind, he did not attempt to fit this production into that specific setting, but wrote for oppressed Israelites in general. The judgment here foretold is not fixed in any special season, but projected into the indefinite future. It is rather ideal and universal than definite and local. It is a culmination of all the doom prophecies and judgments hitherto pronounced, though it is not dependent upon them; but it rather looks to the consummation of Jehovah's dealings with the nations and the final triumphs of His people. The interpretation of this prophecy is, therefore, independent of the time of its composition.

The Form. In form this production is complex, partly prose, partly poetic; but some poetic features, especially parallelisms, appear even in the prose portions. Some scholars regard the whole piece as a poem. The structure admits of an alternation of doom and triumph throughout, and different voices seem to utter laments for the doomed and shouts and songs from Israel. In the following modernized form of this sacred drama an effort is made to exhibit these peculiarities more clearly than they appear in the ordinary Revised Text:*

*For the form of this piece of literature, generous acknowledgements are due to Moulton's *Literary Study of the Bible* (see pp. 416-423). Prof. Moulton, however, in the opinion of the present writer,

(Doom Prophecy.)

Behold, Jehovah maketh the earth empty,
 And maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down,
 And scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.
 And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest;
 As with the servant, so with his master;
 As with the maid, so with her mistress;
 As with the buyer, so with the seller;
 As with the lender, so with the borrower;
 As with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.
 The earth shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled;
 For the Lord hath spokèn the word.

The earth mourneth and fadeth away,
 The world languisheth and fadeth away,
 The lofty people of the earth do languish.
 The earth also is polluted under the inhabitants thereof;
 Because they have transgressed the laws,
 Violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant.
 Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth,
 And they that dwell therein are found guilty;
 Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned,
 And few men are left.
 The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth,
 All the merry-hearted do sigh.
 The mirth of tabrets ceaseth,
 The noise of them that rejoice endeth,
 The joy of the harp ceaseth.
 They shall not drink wine with a song;
 Strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it.

The city of confusion is broken down;
 Every house is shut up, that no man may come in.
 There is crying in the streets because of the wine;
 All joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone.
 In the city is left desolation,
 And the gate is smitten with destruction.

(Concerning Jehovah's people.)

For thus shall it be in the midst of the earth among the peoples, as the shaking of an olive tree, as the grape gleanings when the vintage is done. These shall lift up their voice, they shall shout:

For the Majesty of Jehovah!
 they cry aloud from the sea.

obscures the important divisions of the prophecy by too minute an analysis; and he seems to overlook the fact that a speaker often conceives things both as present and as future, and in the same paragraph utters visions and prediction which should not be separated. For many other points of difference, the interested reader will make comparison.

Wherefore glorify ye Jehovah in the East!

Even the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel in the Isles of the Sea!

(Voices of the doomed.)

From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs:

Glory to the righteous!

But I said, I pine away, I pine away, woe is me! The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.

(Prophecy of doom.)

Fear, and the pit, and the snare are upon thee, O inhabitant of earth. And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear, shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare. For the windows on high are opened, and the foundations of the earth do shake. The earth is utterly broken, the earth is rent asunder, the earth is shaken violently. The earth shall stagger like a drunken man, and shall sway to and fro like a hammock; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy in that day, that Jehovah will punish the host of the high ones on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in prison; and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded and the sun ashamed.

(Concerning Jehovah's people.)

For Jehovah of hosts will reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem; and before his elders shall be glory.

(Song of the elders.)

Ch. 25. O Jehovah, thou art my God; I will exalt thee;
I will praise thy name;
For thou hast done wonderful things,
Even counsels of old, in faithfulness and truth,
For thou hast made of a city a heap,
Of a fortified city a ruin,
A palace of strangers to be no city;
It shall never be built.
Therefore shall a strong people glorify thee;
A city of terrible nations shall fear thee.

For thou hast been a stronghold to the poor,
A stronghold to the needy in his distress,
A refuge from the storm,
A shade from the heat,
When the blast of the terrible ones
Is as a storm against the wall.

As the heat in a dry place
Shalt thou bring down the noise of strangers;
As the heat by the shade of the cloud,
The song of the terrible ones shall be brought low.

(Prophecy.)

And in this mountain will Jehovah of hosts make unto all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering that covereth all peoples, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He hath swallowed up death forever; and the Lord Jehovah will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the reproach of his people will he take away from off all the earth: for Jehovah hath spoken it.

(A song.)

And it shall be said in that day,
Lo, this is our God;
We have waited for him,
And he will save us.

This is Jehovah;
We have waited for him, we will be glad
And rejoice in his salvation.

(Prophecy of doom.)

For in this mountain will the hand of Jehovah rest; and Moab shall be trodden down in his place, even as straw is trodden down in the water of the dunghill. And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst thereof, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim; but Jehovah will lay low his pride together with the craft of his hands. And the high fortress of thy walls hath he brought down, laid low, and brought to the ground even to the dust.

Ch. 26. (A song by Jehovah's people.)

In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah:
Salvation will he appoint for walls and bulwarks.
Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation
Which keepeth faith may enter in.
Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace
Whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.
Trust ye in Jehovah forever;
For in Jehovah, even Jehovah, is a rock of ages.

For he hath brought down them that dwell on high, the lofty city
He layeth it low, he layeth it low even to the ground;
He bringeth it even to the dust.
The foot shall tread it down;
Even the feet of the poor,
And the steps of the needy.

The way of the just is uprightness:
Thou that art upright dost direct the path of the just.
Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Jehovah,
Have we waited for thee;
To thy name, even to thy memorial name,
Is the desire of our soul.

With my soul have I desired thee in the night;
 Yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early:
 For when thy judgments are in the earth,
 The inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.
 Let favor be shown to the wicked,
 Yet will he not learn righteousness;
 In the land of uprightness will he deal wrongfully,
 And will not behold the majesty of Jehovah.

(Prophecy of doom.)

Jehovah, thy hand is lifted up, yet they see not: but they shall see thy zeal for the people, and be put to shame; yea, fire shall devour thine adversaries.

(Voices of the righteous.)

Jehovah, thou wilt ordain peace for us; for thou hast also wrought all our works for us. O Jehovah our God, other lords besides thee have had dominion over us; but by thee only will we make mention of thy name. They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise. Therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all remembrance of them to perish. Thou hast increased the nation, O Jehovah, thou hast increased the nation; thou art glorified; thou hast enlarged all the borders of the land. Jehovah, in trouble have they visited thee; they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.

(Voices of the doomed.)

Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain and crieth out in her pangs; so we have been before thee, O Jehovah. We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world been born.

(A voice from the righteous.)

Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth the dead. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, Jehovah cometh forth out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

Ch. 27. (Prophecy of doom.)

In that day Jehovah with his hard and great and strong sword will punish leviathan the swift serpent, and leviathan the crooked serpent; and he will slay the monster that is in the sea.

(Song by Jehovah's people.)

In that day:

A vineyard of wine, (sing ye unto it,)

I Jehovah am its keeper; I will water it every moment;
Lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.

Wrath is not in me:
Would that briars and thorns were against me in battle!
I would march upon them, I would burn them together.

Or else let him take hold of my strength,
That he may make peace with me;
Yea, let him make peace with me.

In days to come shall Jacob take root;
Israel shall blossom and bud;
And they shall fill the face of the world with fruit.

(Prophecy concerning Israel.)

Hath he smitten them as he smote those that smote them? Or are they slain according to the slaughter of them that were slain by them? In measure, when thou sendest them away, thou dost contend with them; he hath removed them with his rough blast in the day of the east wind. Therefore by this shall the iniquity of Jacob be forgiven, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin; that he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, so that the Asherim and the sun-images shall rise no more.

(Prophecy of doom.)

For the defenced city is solitary, a habitation deserted and forsaken, like the wilderness. There shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof. When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off; the women shall come, and set them on fire; for it is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them will not have compassion upon them, and he that formed them will show them no favor.

(Prophecy of Jehovah's people.)

And it shall come to pass in that day that Jehovah will beat off his fruit from the flood of the river unto the brook of Egypt; and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great trumpet shall be blown; and they shall come that were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and they that were outcasts in the land of Egypt; and they shall worship Jehovah in the holy mountain at Jerusalem."

**The Doom
Element.**

The darker side of this prophecy may be easily misunderstood. It does not mean that the prophets had no kindly wishes for the nations, or that the oppressions which Israel had suffered had made these writers vindictive, nor yet that Jehovah as a local God is simply to prevail over the other local gods; but rather that Je-

hovah by virtue of His universal power and dominion must ultimately overthrow all opposition. Since these nations were idolatrous, and stubbornly refused Jehovah's rule, just as in Ps. ii, they must be "trodden down" and "few men left." The lands, cities and other possessions, in this poetic form of the thought, must partake in the doom of the people, just as Paul represents the world as sharing the present weakness and final glory of men (Rom. 8:19-22). This acme of doom predictions signifies the destined overthrow of idolatry and the final defeat of tyranny and every other widespread evil. Toward this end all prophecy moves, and toward this accomplishment all Messianic efforts are directed.

**The
Poor.**

The oppressed condition of Israel at the time of this prediction leads the prophet to lay emphasis on the triumphs of the poor over "them that dwell on high, the lofty city." Clearly Jehovah's people are regarded as the poor, and their fortune springs up over the pride, wealth and injustice of their oppressors. The situation was a typical one. In all later times the righteous have had a like struggle against the powers and arrogance of the world; and it is notable that in the esteem of impartial historians the victory has always tended toward the righteous oppressed. The principle that Jehovah favors and ultimately vindicates the upright, that He is "a stronghold to the needy in his distress," is consistently maintained by prophets and apostles.

**The Personal
God.**

Many expressions, such as, "O Jehovah, thou art my God; I will exalt thee," "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him," indicate the individual interest in Jehovah and personal confidence in His care. This individual relationship to Jehovah was encouraged by exile and oppression, although the religion of Israel was generally national; and yet this personal feature was in keeping with the divine intent. Jehovah was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and became a national God only in consequence of Israel's growth into a nation. Later by divine purpose He was to become distinctly the God of each individual, forming individual covenants and writing His laws in individual hearts

(Heb. viii). Thus Messianic ideas were strengthened by the experiences of Israel in these valleys of sorrow.

**Jehovah's
Reign.**

Although the earth is to fall not to rise again (24:20), "Jehovah of hosts will reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem" (24:23). Here is a suggestive limitation of prophecy; for in the New Testament predictions, a new heaven and a new earth are to follow the general judgment and destruction of the present world. This prophet says nothing of a new earth; but in his reconstruction of human affairs after the overthrow of sin, Jerusalem is to be the seat of divine government. This reign of Jehovah is distant, final and ideal in this prophecy; and, indeed, its very location in Zion signifies its identity with the Messianic rule already well anticipated in the days of this prophet.

**Jehovah's
Feast.**

A great coronation festival will inaugurate Jehovah's reign at Jerusalem (25:6, 7). This is not for Judah alone, but for "all nations." It is intended to mark the end of sorrows and the beginning of joys. Jehovah will destroy "the face of the covering that covereth all peoples, and the veil that is spread over all nations," which means that the veil of mourning over the cruelties of past tyranny and the devastations of judgment will be removed in the new gladness of the glorious dominion of God. The feast will consist of the richest of all blessings, the very "marrow" of delights, the refinement of citizen joys. Thus is pictured the rejoicing at the beginning of the final reign of Jehovah among men. Compare Matt. 8:11; 22:2 ff.; Luke 14:15 ff.

**The
Resurrection.**

In the joy of the feast is the announcement that Jehovah "has swallowed up death forever" (25:8). This means the final abolition of death and the introduction of the life eternal. This is perhaps the clearest expression of immortality in the Old Testament.* The

*While the doctrine of immortality is implied in the translation of Enoch and Elijah and the resurrection of certain dead persons, it is remarkable that many trusted passages on the subject have rather a disappointing ambiguity. For example, Ps. 17:15, "I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness," is translated in the R. V., "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with beholding thy form;" and it may be a prayer in peril (v. 13) at night, and express the confidence that God will

idea is repeated in 26:19, "Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth the dead." This thought has arisen naturally in this connection. The prophet reviews Israel's past, and recalls how their ranks were thinned by war and exile; and though Jehovah has increased the nation (v. 15), its numbers are not commensurate with the glory to which it has attained. Where are its multitudes? Dead. How can they be recovered? Only by a resurrection. The ideal glory can never be realized without the recovery of the dead, who are to appear fresh as the dew of the morning; and hence to the prophet the doctrine of the resurrection is assured. This thought has been clearly reaffirmed by Jesus (John 5:28-29) and by Paul (I. Cor. xv), and constitutes one of the leading Messianic doctrines.

4. *The Doom of Edom.*

There are three predictions of the fall of Edom, of which the first (Isa. xxxiv) is connected with the judgment that is impending over the whole earth. The date of this prophecy is unknown. The style is poetic, and the essential portion (vv. 1-10) may be thus arranged:

**First
Prophecy.**

"Come near, ye nations, to hear;
And hearken, ye peoples:
Let the earth hear, and the fulness thereof;
The world, and all things that come forth from it.

manifest Himself by deliverance at the waking hour of morn. For the contrary view, however, see Delitzsch Commentary. So, "God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol; for he will receive me" (Ps. 49:15), may mean only that God will save from death. Likewise, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (Ps. 73:24), may not include more than divine favor and reward in this life. Even Job 14:13-15 can be pressed to mean no more than a wish to hide in the grave, and find a vindication afterward. Job 19:25-27, "I know that my Redeemer lives," etc., seems, as Oehler (O. T. Theol. p. 565) strongly urges, to be rather a conclusion to which the sufferer was driven by his faith in God and his woes which appeared inexplicable in this life, than an oracle received by a prophet. The words of Dan. 12:2, 3 are more definite, and imply, not only a resurrection of many, but the immortality of some that "shall shine as the stars forever."

For Jehovah hath indignation against all nations,
 And wrath against all their host:
 He hath utterly destroyed them,
 He hath delivered them to the slaughter.
 Their slain also shall be cast out,
 And the stench of their dead bodies shall come up;
 And the mountains shall be melted with their blood.
 And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved,
 And the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll;
 And all their host shall fade away,
 As the leaf fadeth from off the vine,
 As a fading leaf from the fig-tree.

For my sword hath drunk its fill in heaven:
 Behold, it shall come down upon Edom,
 And upon the people of my curse, to judgment.
 The sword of Jehovah is filled with blood,
 It is made fat with fatness,
 With the blood of lambs and goats,
 With the fat of the kidneys of rams;
 For Jehovah hath a sacrifice in Bozrah,
 And a great slaughter in the land of Edom.
 And the wild oxen shall come down with them,
 And the bullocks with the bulls;
 And their land shall be drunken with blood,
 And their dust made fat with fatness.

For Jehovah hath a day of vengeance,
 A year of recompense for the cause of Zion.
 And the streams of Edom shall be turned into pitch,
 And the dust thereof into brimstone,
 And the land thereof shall become burning pitch.
 It shall not be quenched night nor day;
 The smoke thereof shall go up for ever;
 From generation to generation it shall lie waste;
 None shall pass through it for ever and ever."

**Its
Justice.**

This is not a vindictive threat by an Israelite against a neighboring nation that for generations has been hostile and most provocative of a deep-seated hatred; but it is a necessary part of Jehovah's purpose to bring to nought all those nations that had a prominent share in afflicting Israel without just cause. In the very nature of Jehovah's work with Israel in behalf of the race, He could not justly do otherwise than protect His agents or avenge the wrongs which they suffered. The fact that Israel sinned against God, and deserved some of their misfortunes, did not lessen the guilt of those who trampled them down without regard to right.

Moreover, the final triumph of truth and fall of error demanded the overthrow of a people that for generations refused the light of revelation, and persisted in the perpetuation of every heathenish barbarity. The fall of Edom was also to be a part of the ideal deliverance of the world from its vile infections by sin into its final glory.

**The Heavens
Involved.**

In connection with the judgment "all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their host shall fade away, as the leaf fadeth from off the vine, and as a fading leaf from the fig-tree" (v. 4). While this is a strong poetic figure, it is a part of the general prophecy of the final catastrophe that must overtake all material things and end the age of temporal affairs. The word "dissolve" represents a Hebrew term which is used of the wasting away of parts of a body by disease (Ps. 38:6; Zech. 14:12, et al.), as if the host of heaven, the stars, were infected by the pollutions on earth from the dead bodies consequent to the judgment. This figure is strong, but not more picturesque than the rolling of the heavens together as a scroll and the fading of the heavenly bodies as leaves plucked from a vine or fig-tree. In Matt. 24:29, Jesus expresses a similar thought in the words, "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven;" and the prophecy as enlarged by Peter is essentially the same: "The heavens that now are and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men," and "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:7-10). In Isaiah the destruction is wrought by Jehovah's sword, in Peter by fire; but these are only different figures to mark the divine power over all nature to overthrow when the purposes of the world have been accomplished.

**Second
Prophecy.**

The second utterance against Edom (Isa. 63:1-6) is presented in the form of a dialogue between the prophet and Jehovah as follows:

(Prophet.) Who is this that cometh from Edom,
With dyed garments from Bozrah?
This that is glorious in his apparel,
Marching in the greatness of his strength?

(Jehovah.) I that speak in righteousness,
That am mighty to save.

(Prophet.) Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel,
And thy garments like him that treadeth in the winevat?

(Jehovah.) I have trodden the winepress alone;
And of the peoples there was no man with me;
Yea, I trod them in mine anger,
And trampled them in my wrath;
And their life-blood is sprinkled upon my garments,
And I have stained all my raiment.
For the day of vengeance was in my heart,
And the year of my redeemed is come.
And I looked, and there was none to help;
And I wondered that there was none to uphold:
Therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me;
And my wrath, it upheld me.
And I trod down the peoples in mine anger,
And made them drunk in my wrath,
And I poured out their life-blood on the earth."

**Its
Import.**

This dramatic representation is an impressive picture of the punishment to be visited by Jehovah upon the Edomites. Jehovah under the figure of a treader of grapes, comes from Bozrah, an Edomite city, reddened with the blood of his enemies, as a grape-treader is stained by the juice of the grapes. Edom has been trodden down by Jehovah in His fury; and since it is a matter of "vengeance," it is on account of Edom's conspicuous cruelties to Israel, which formed only one class of her manifold iniquities. The "wonder" that there was none to assist in the execution serves to emphasize the strictly divine character of the fall of Edom. It must not be supposed that merely human forces effected the disaster, but that Jehovah's plans were being fulfilled.

**Third
Prophecy.**

The third prophecy against Edom was given by the prophet Obadiah, who predicted the fall of Edom and the rescue of Israel probably about the time when Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. The Edomites were especially merciless to the inhabitants of

Judah during that season of weakness and distress. Verses 15-21 embrace the most significant portion of the prophecy.

“For the day of Jehovah is near upon all the nations:
As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee;
Thy dealing shall return upon thine own head.
For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain,
So shall all the nations drink continually;
Yea, they shall drink, and swallow down,
And shall be as though they had not been.

But in Mount Zion there shall be those that escape,
And it shall be holy;
And the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.
And the house of Jacob shall be a fire,
And the house of Joseph a flame,
And the house of Esau for stubble,
And they shall burn among them and devour them;
And there shall be none remaining to the house of Esau;
For Jehovah hath spoken it.

And they of the South shall possess the Mount of Esau,
And they of the lowland and the Philistines;
And they shall possess the field of Ephraim,
And the field of Samaria;
And Benjamin shall possess Gilead.
And the captives of this host of the children of Israel
That are among the Canaanites, shall possess even unto Zarephath;
And the captives of Jerusalem, that are in Sepharad,
Shall possess the cities of the South.
And saviors shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau;
And the kingdom shall be Jehovah's.”

Here again the destruction of Esau is a part
Its of the desolation of the earth, which the prophets
Significance. often foresaw. Esau is only one of the peoples
 with whom Jehovah has an irreconcilable controversy, and with
 whom He will be an unsparing Vindicator of the innocent.
 The fall of Esau will mark the fortune of Israel. The future is
 described in terms suited to form a contrast with the misfor-
 tune through which the Jews were then passing. They were
 being dispossessed of all their lands; but they are sometime to
 possess, not only these ancestral tracts, but also Edom, Philistia,
 Samaria and part of Phoenicia. All this is but a picture in
 materialistic forms of the ideal future of Jehovah's people.
 Edom had no ideals, no visions of the future, no far off glory
 laid up in divine care and which no temporary disaster could

thwart. The one nation, like its ancestor Esau, was "profane;" the other, like Jacob, had received a birthright approved of Jehovah and now greatly enriched with Messianic promises.

Section II. Prophecies of the Sufferer.

1. *The Acceptable Offering. Psalm xl. 6-10.*

Attitude of the Writer. As the earlier verses of this Psalm indicate, the author has passed through a severe trial, has been brought up "out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay," and his feet set "upon a rock." While some scholars hold that this was written by David, as the title suggests, others, comparing this pit and mire with that into which Jeremiah was cast (Jer. 38:6), and noting that the whole tone of the Psalm is suited rather to Jeremiah's experiences, insist that it belongs to the time of that prophet. The interpretation is sufficiently clear from the circumstances implied by the writer even if we cannot definitely determine the date of composition. The leading Messianic portion (vv. 6-10) may be thus rendered:

"Sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight in;
 (Mine ears hast thou opened)
 Burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required.
 Then said I, Lo, I am come;
 (In the roll of the book it is written of me)
 I delight to do thy will, O my God;
 Yea, thy law is within my heart.
 I have proclaimed glad tidings of righteousness in the great assembly;
 Lo, I will not refrain my lips,
 O Jehovah, thou knowest.
 I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart;
 I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation;
 I have not concealed thy lovingkindness
 And thy truth from the great assembly."

The Experience. A personal experience is here depicted, not that of the nation or of the church, though there is good reason to believe that this is written for those to appreciate who may with like resignation pass through similar misfortunes. Possibly "the pit" and the "mire" are figures based on such an event as that which befell Jeremiah; but if the writer lived during the closing days of the monarchy,

there were doubtless many servants of Jehovah who suffered and escaped various tortures and distresses.

**The
Sacrifice.**

The writer has had his ears "opened" by experience to learn that Jehovah desires an obedient spirit rather than the offerings at the altar.

The burnt-offerings were rejected by Jehovah, not because He wished to change the form of worship in Israel, but because these offerings were not accompanied by a faithful heart and a godly life; and our poet had learned the higher principle of presenting himself to God as the more acceptable sacrifice. It is the same truth as that taught by Samuel (1 Sam. 15:22): "Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Sacrifices by wicked people became abominable to Jehovah, so that prophets in this great moral extremity of the nation were sometimes forced to preach against sacrifices as if they were wrong, in order the more effectively to insist upon an obedient spirit.

**New Testament
Application.**

In Heb. 10:4-10, the writer teaches that the sacrifices of the altar cannot take away sin, but that the "body" of Jesus became a perfect and effectual offering. This passage in the Psalms is there quoted to emphasize the value of the voluntary, personal offering of the body of Christ above the sacrifice of beasts, and these words, "Lo, I am come to do thy will, O God," are put into the mouth of Jesus. His offering was acceptable, because he was willing to obey. He presented himself to God, and in this one respect the Psalmist was a type of Christ. The words in the Psalm are not spoken directly of Jesus, and hence are not prediction; but the Psalmist was in the one point mentioned a representative, ideal man, hence a necessary type of Christ. Any sufferer who thus yielded freely to the divine will was an image of the Christ, and his words of resignation would be applicable to the Savior's gift of life for man. Such types are not rare in the Old Testament; for although men might have many weaknesses, not a few must have arisen in one or more elements of character to that ideal manhood to which Jesus wonderfully rose in all points.

It should be expected that man in the image of God might present many transient and fragmentary images of that Word which was made flesh and dwelt among men.

2. *The Cry for Help. Psalms xl. 12-17, and lxx.*

“For innumerable evils have compassed me about;
 Mine iniquities have overtaken me,
 So that I am not able to look up;
 They are more than the hairs of my head;
 And my heart hath failed me.
 Be pleased, O Jehovah, to deliver me;
 Make haste to help me, O Jehovah.

Let them be put to shame and confounded together
 That seek after my soul to destroy it;
 Let them be turned backward and brought to dishonor
 That delight in my hurt.
 Let them be desolate by reason of their shame
 That say unto me, Aha, aha.

Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee;
 Let such as love thy salvation say continually,
 Jehovah be magnified.
 But I am poor and needy;
 Yet the Lord thinketh upon me:
 Thou art my help and my deliverer;
 Make no tarrying, O my God.”

The latter part of Psalm xl and Psalm lxx
Value. are the same with slight variations. They represent the sufferer as calling upon Jehovah for relief, and invoking the divine judgment against persecutors. The imprecations of xl. 14, 15, certainly do not rise to the high level of Messianic sentiment, but mark a stage in the progress of the people of God toward patient endurance and the love of enemies, the perfect culmination of which was reached in the teaching and example of Jesus of Nazareth. The writer pronounces his benediction on all who seek Jehovah, and bids those who love His salvation say continually, “Jehovah be magnified.” This universality of sympathy with those that worship God and this devotion of the sufferer to Him in whose name affliction is endured are the ideal elements of the poem.

3. *Jehovah the Sufferer's Refuge. Psalms lxi and lxxi.*

**The Two
Psalms.**

These two psalms exhibit the same conditions and religious tone as Psalms xl and lxx. The leading thought appears in the following extract

(lxxi. 1-5) :

Let me never be put to shame.
Deliver me in thy righteousness, and rescue me:
Bow down thine ear unto me, and save me.
Be thou to me a rock of habitation,
Whereunto I may continually resort:
Thou hast given commandment to save me;
For thou art my rock and my fortress.
Rescue me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked,
Out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.
For thou art my hope, O Lord Jehovah:
Thou art my trust from my youth."

**The Chief
Burden.**

The writer's distress is brought on by "the unrighteous and cruel man;" but from his youth he has trusted in Jehovah, and now trusts Him none the less in advanced years (v. 18). This is an ideal faith, and finds its perpetual parallel in the heroic trust of Christian martyrs. These psalms are not predictions, but rather reflections of exalted manliness under severe trial. They do not exhibit perfection, as the tone of the imprecations (lxix. 22-28) indicates; but the interplay of human elements with those which have been prompted by the divine Spirit distinguished fallible man struggling up the heights from Him who is "by the right hand of God exalted." Men at best are but broken rays of that Light that shines with undimmed glory. It is He alone that sets the perfect pattern of faith in God; of which the faith of these psalmists is but a wavering foregleam.

Section III. Prophecies of the Servant.

**Time of
These
Prophecies.**

A most remarkable series of prophetic utterances are those which relate to the "Servant of Jehovah" contained in Isaiah xl-lxvi. These chapters form a section of the book of Isaiah distinct from the chapters that precede them, and presuppose a different historical situation. The people for whom these

chapters were written were exiles in Babylonia, and were exhorted to prepare to return to the land of their fathers. Indeed, some of these chapters seem to be intended for Israel after their return. In no respect is the historical environment of the prophet Isaiah implied in these chapters, and this has led modern critics to believe that they were written by some prophet about 546 B. C. and later.

**Main Fact
Admitted.**

It is not the appropriate place in this work to present the long and tedious argument that would be required to exhibit in fairness both sides of the critical questions of date and authorship of this section, and fortunately this is not necessary; for candid scholars even of the most conservative type admit the only fact that is important to the interpretation of the Messianic features of the prophecy, that, whoever the writer may have been, the message assumes the Babylonian Exile and the return of Israel, and is intended to meet the spiritual needs of Israel in those times. This fact is patent on the surface of the prophecy, and does not invite controversy. On the basis of this acknowledged setting of the prophecy, all its developments must be studied.

**Servant of
Jehovah.**

A servant is not always a slave or a hired man; for a subject, or a visitor to a king, any person addressing God, especially a worshiper, is called a servant. Hence the people of God are His servants (Deut. 32:36), or the leaders of His people (I. Kings 8:32, 36), and notably the prophets (Amos 3:7). The whole nation, because it was called to do a special work for Jehovah naturally became His servant; and in the chapters about to be studied Israel is distinguished from other people under the special title "the Servant of Jehovah." It may be seen as the studies progress that this Servant gradually takes on more and more the character of an individual; but that the nation at first is in the mind of the writer is clear from the following (41: 8-10):

"But thou, Israel, my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend, thou whom I have taken hold of from the ends of the earth, and called from the corners thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant, I have chosen thee and not cast thee away; fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will

strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

**The Nation
Called.**

Here the names Israel and Jacob evidently signify the nation; and it is manifest that by the "seed of Abraham" the nation as a whole is meant. The entire thought of the passage conforms to this idea. It was the nation that was called from the "ends of the earth;" and the choice of Abraham and the call of Israel out of Egypt constituted all the nation the special servant of Jehovah in the world. There was a great reason for saying I have "not cast thee away;" for when the national government of Israel had been overthrown, and the people had been scattered abroad in many lands, it certainly seemed that God had forsaken them. This prophecy is given with the very intent to make despondent Israel see that the choice made generations before looked toward a purpose which Jehovah has not abandoned.

1. *The Announcement of the Servant. Isa. xlii. 1-9.*

**Form of
Text.**

The first passage in which the work of the Servant appears, may be thus presented in imitation of its original poetic structure:

"Behold, my servant, whom I uphold;
My chosen, in whom my soul delighteth:
I have put my Spirit upon him;
He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.
He will not cry, nor lift up his voice,
Nor cause it to be heard in the street.
A bruised reed will he not break,
And a dimly burning wick will he not quench:
He will bring forth justice in truth.
He will not fail nor be discouraged,
Till he have set justice in the earth;
And the Isles shall wait for his law.

Thus saith God Jehovah,
He that created the heavens, and stretched them forth;
He that spread abroad the earth and that which cometh out of it;
He that giveth breath unto the people upon it,
And spirit to them that walk therein:
I, Jehovah, have called thee in righteousness,
And will hold thine hand, and will keep thee,
And give thee for a covenant of the people,
For a light of the Gentiles;
To open the blind eyes,

To bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
 And them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house.
 I am Jehovah, that is my name;
 And my glory will I not give to another,
 Neither my praise unto graven images.
 Behold, the former things are come to pass,
 And new things do I declare;
 Before they spring forth I tell you of them.”

**The
 Contrast.**

The contrast between Israel in exile and Israel in the ideal future is here set forth in various points. Over against the cry that has gone up from the afflicted people, stands the promise that his voice shall not be heard in the street; and this signifies, not only that the days of grief will be past, but also that the nation will not be demonstrative in its triumphs. Being called of God, the divine dignity will mark her future career. In the hands of cruel captors Israel has often been first bruised, and then mercilessly broken; but in her future dealings with fallen humanity she will not savagely snuff out the light of life that burns low in sorrow and in weakness. Many innocent people in Israel have suffered awful injustice at the hands of their foes, as if there were no law for the protection of the helpless; but this chosen nation will bring justice to the earth, and establish a law which even the Grecian and Roman coastlands will welcome.

**The
 Covenant.**

The Servant is to become a “covenant of the people, a light of the Gentiles.” This anticipates a covenant relation between God and the nations that shall be mediated by Israel. In the nature of the case the mediation could go no further than a negotiation of the covenant and the shedding of the blood of the covenant. This is confessedly a very remarkable office for a nation to perform. It is even more remarkable that, while no other nation has done such a thing, Israel has proclaimed to all the world the covenant of salvation and provided the offering by whose blood the covenant is sealed. The prophet has not told us the details of this wonderful work; but that he rightly discerned the true office of the nation, cannot, in the light of later developments, be called in question.

The Purpose.

The purpose of this covenant harmonizes with the human spirit which Israel was to manifest; for it is "to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon." The Babylonians had often put out the eyes of their captives, and cast many of them into prison; but in striking contrast, Israel will secure a covenant with the peoples of the earth that will bring an era of kindness and mercy, looking toward the relief of the unfortunate and the release of those who are unjustly held in prison—in short an ideal, Messianic age.

2. *Protection of Jehovah's Servant. Isa. xliii. 1-21 and xliv. 1-5.*

Passage.

The disposition of Jehovah to guard and rescue His Servant Israel is expressed in two passages in poetic form, the first of which may be thus arranged:

But now thus saith Jehovah that created thee, O Jacob,
And he that formed thee, O Israel;
Fear not, for I have redeemed thee;
I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine.
When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee;
And through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee:
When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned;
Neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

For I am Jehovah thy God,
The Holy One of Israel, thy Savior;
I have given Egypt as thy ransom,
Ethiopia and Seba in thy stead.
Since thou hast been precious in my sight,
And honorable, and I have loved thee;
Therefore will I give men in thy stead,
And peoples instead of thy life.

Fear not; for I am with thee:
I will bring thy seed from the east,
And gather thee from the west;
I will say to the north, Give up;
And to the south, Keep not back:
Bring my sons from far,
And my daughters from the end of the earth;
Every one that is called by my name,
And whom I have created for my glory,
Whom I have formed, yea, whom I have made.

Bring forth the blind people that have eyes,
 And the deaf that have ears.
 Let all the nations be gathered together,
 And let the peoples be assembled:
 Who among them can declare this,
 And shew us former things?
 Let them bring their witnesses, that they may be justified;
 Or let them hear, and say, It is truth.

Ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah,
 And my servant whom I have chosen;
 That ye may know and believe me,
 And understand that I am he:
 Before me there was no God formed,
 Neither shall there be after me.
 I, even I, am Jehovah;
 And besides me there is no savior.
 I have declared, and have saved, and have shewed;
 And there was no strange god among you:
 Therefore ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah, and I am God.
 Yea, since the day was I am he;
 And there is none that can deliver out of my hand:
 I will work, and who can hinder it?

Thus saith Jehovah, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:
 For your sake I have sent to Babylon,
 And I will bring down all of them as fugitives,
 Even the Chaldeans, in the ships of their rejoicing.
 I am Jehovah, your Holy One,
 The Creator of Israel, your King.

Thus saith Jehovah, who maketh a way in the sea,
 And a path in the mighty waters;
 Who bringeth forth the chariot and horse,
 The army and the mighty man
 (They lie down together, they shall not rise;
 They are extinct, they are quenched as a wick):
 Remember ye not the former things,
 Neither consider the things of old.
 Behold, I will do a new thing;
 Now shall it spring forth; shall ye not know it?
 I will even make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert,
 The beasts of the field shall honor me, the jackals and the ostriches;
 Because I give waters in the wilderness and rivers in the desert,
 To give drink to my people, my chosen,
 The people which I formed for myself,
 That they might set forth my praise.

The Situation. This poem strongly reflects the exilic condition of Israel for which it was written. The nation is in danger of being overflowed as by rivers or consumed as by fire; it is in the hands of captors, so

that other nations are to be given for its ransom and release; its people are scattered, so that they must be gathered from every point of the compass and from the ends of the earth; and especially are they in Babylon, so that Jehovah must send an army thither and take the Babylonians captive before Israel can enjoy her final freedom. It is evident that this situation forms the mold in which this whole prophecy is cast.

**The
Redemption.**

The redemption mentioned in the opening of the poem must be interpreted by the "ransom" in which other nations are given for Israel (v. 3). This is primarily, not a spiritual redemption, but national, and refers to the intended return of Israel to her homeland and her consequent freedom from those who held her in captivity. Persia was sent to Babylon "to bring down" the Chaldeans, as promised here (v. 14), and to Persia the ransom was given. Israel was returned by this nation, and under Cambyes were Egypt, Ethiopia and Seba brought under Persian power. But the divine intent here is not to foretell history, but to impress upon Israel Jehovah's valuation of His people in spite of their misfortunes. This will at once encourage the despondent, quicken faith and point the expectation of Israel to some future work under divine guidance.

The

"New Thing." The "new thing" promised is to be so notable that former things are to be forgotten (vv. 18, 19); for a greater event than the crossing of the Red Sea shall occur. The vast wilderness that lies between Babylon and Palestine is to be no barrier to the return of Israel, but the pathless sands shall become a highway, and the waterless waste shall be refreshed with rivers. This is not for the purpose of reclaiming worthless soil, but that Israel may be encouraged to believe in her return which now seems impossible. Still, a higher ultimate end is sought; and the poem closes with this climax in the divine purpose, that "they might set forth my praise." Israel's highest office is to present to the world the greatness and goodness of God.

**The Second
Passage.**

In a manner very similar to the above, Jehovah addresses Israel in xliv. 1-5.

Yet now hear, O Jacob, my servant,
 And Israel whom I have chosen:
 Thus saith Jehovah that made thee,
 And formed thee from the womb,
 Who will help thee:
 Fear not, O Jacob my servant;
 And thou, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen.
 For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty,
 And streams upon the dry ground;
 I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed,
 And my blessing upon thine offspring:
 And they shall spring up among the grass,
 As willows by the watercourses.
 One shall say, I am Jehovah's;
 And another shall call himself by the name of Jacob;
 And another shall subscribe with his hand unto Jehovah,
 And surname himself by the name of Israel.

Fitness
 to Exiles.

Here again the blessings promised are put in a form suited to exiles in Babylonia. Water poured upon the thirsty and streams upon the dry ground were familiar types of favor in the hot, sandy plain where irrigating streams were indispensable. But temporal good will not exhaust Jehovah's gracious purposes toward His people; for He will pour out also His Spirit upon them, and in this manner qualify them for the office to which He has called them. This will be the highest qualification which they could have, since it will supply more than mere ability. It will inspire them with an irresistible impulse to do the divine will, and much more, will impart to them a richness of character which will make them eminent among the moral forces of the world. This will be a wonderful refreshing to them who are in a religious wilderness and moral waste.

A Turning
 to Jehovah.

Following such blessings will be a season of turning to Jehovah. Some will acknowledge that they are Jehovah's, others name themselves after Jehovah's Servant Jacob, and thus both Jehovah and His Servant receive recognition from men. This brings up the intended result of God's dealing with Israel, which was not for themselves alone, but also for all mankind. The conversion of the world to Jehovah consummates the great Messianic plan toward which all the temporary redemptions and blessings of the chosen people point forward.

3. *The Dignity of the Servant's Calling. Isa. xlix. 1-13.*

The Passage. In a style very similar to that of preceding passages, and with some repetition of thought, the prophet proclaims the call of the Servant and the dignity to which he shall be raised. The words are put into the Servant's mouth and addressed to distant peoples before whom Israel has suffered the deepest humiliations. The chief portion of this announcement is included in xlix. 1-13, which may be presented in the following form:

Listen, O Isles, unto me;
 And hearken, ye peoples, from far:
 Jehovah hath called me from the womb;
 From the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name:
 And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword;
 In the shadow of his hand hath he hid me:
 And he hath made me a polished shaft;
 In his quiver hath he kept me close:
 And he said unto me, Thou art my servant;
 Israel, in whom I will be glorified.

But I said, I have labored in vain,
 I have spent my strength for nought and vanity;
 Yet surely the justice due to me is with Jehovah,
 And my recompense with my God.

And now saith Jehovah,
 That formed me from the womb to be his servant,
 To bring Jacob again to him,
 And that Israel be gathered unto him;
 (For I am honorable in the eyes of Jehovah,
 And my God is become my strength;)
 Yea, he saith, It is too light a thing
 That thou shouldest be my servant
 To raise up the tribes of Jacob,
 And to restore the preserved of Israel:
 I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles,
 That thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

Thus saith Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel.
 And his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth,
 To him whom the nation abhorreth,
 To a servant of rulers:
 Kings shall see and arise;
 Princes, and they shall worship;
 Because of Jehovah that is faithful,
 Even the Holy One of Israel, who hath chosen thee.

Thus saith Jehovah, In an acceptable time have I answered thee,
 And in a day of salvation have I helped thee;
 And I will preserve thee,
 And give thee for a covenant of the people,
 To raise up the land,
 To make them inherit the desolate heritages;
 Saying to them that are bound, Go forth;
 To them that are in darkness, Show yourselves.

They shall feed in the ways,
 And on all bare heights shall be their pasture.
 They shall not hunger nor thirst;
 Neither shall the heat nor sun smite them:
 For he that hath mercy on them will lead them,
 Even by springs of water will he guide them.
 And I will make all my mountains a way,
 And my highways shall be exalted.
 Lo, these shall come from far;
 And, lo, these from the north and from the west;
 And these from the land of Sinim.

Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth;
 And break forth into singing, O mountains:
 For Jehovah hath comforted his people,
 And will have compassion upon his afflicted.

The important matter here is the call of the
 Israel's Discouragement. Servant, who, as if he were a person, is selected by Jehovah before his birth. This is intended to assure Israel that Jehovah has from the very beginning of her existence claimed her as His own. He has made her His weapon of war; but the word "mouth" indicates that it is to be a struggle of ideas, a spiritual warfare. The war has not yet begun; for as in a quiver the weapon has been kept close. Israel deeply feels that she has thus far done nothing for Jehovah, although she has passed through great labors, and spent her strength; and hence she is discouraged.

The Exalted Task. While Israel laments her failure to meet Jehovah's purposes, she has a lofty consolation, that her recompense is with her God, and that He is become her strength. She realizes that her exalted task is still before her, and therefore she yet stands in honor with her Lord. The task is double: (1) the lighter part, although she may esteem it a very important duty, is to raise up those tribes of Judah that now are prostrate in the worldwide cap-

tivity and restore those to freedom which have not perished in the awful slaughter through which the people have passed; and (2) the far greater office will be to become the light and salvation of Jehovah for the whole Gentile world. This salvation is not the rescue of Judah from Persia; for it is no temporal or national salvation; for the Gentiles did not need these. It can be only the result of that spiritual warfare unto which Israël is called, and is therefore a spiritual salvation.

Nature of the Salvation. The nature of the salvation can be inferred from the fact that "kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall worship, because of Jehovah that is faithful." The salvation consists in bringing men to worship Jehovah; for it is a salvation of the soul from the evils of idolatry and heathen corruptions. Kings and princes are mentioned to indicate the power of Jehovah's Servant in contrast with the weakness and futility of all past efforts and the utter desperation of the present. This view of the salvation is confirmed by the repetition of the "covenant" which Israel is to mediate (v. 8; and see above, xlii. 6), and by the general prophetic idea of the future relations of the Gentiles to Jehovah.

Identity of the Servant. The identity of the Servant in this part of the prophecy requires consideration. He is called Israel (v. 3), yet he speaks as a person, and assumes the office of raising up the tribes of Jacob and restoring the preserved of Israel as if he were not Israel. In this passage, (1) he cannot be a prophet; for he would not be addressed by the name Israel, nor would he have an office so extensive and notable as that ascribed to the Servant. (2) He cannot be all Israel; for he is to restore the preserved of Israel and Jehovah promises to preserve him, that he may bring about the return of the people to their desolate heritages. (3) It seems better to understand that the Servant is Israel, but yet only the faithful portion of Israel, including those who will lead in the accomplishment of the work to which the nation has been called. The word Servant is a personification of the better portion of Israel, and is here represented as recognizing the national office

as if he were an individual.* We notice that the word is here used in a narrower sense than in the previous passages; while at the same time his Messianic duties become more distinct and responsible.

4. *The Servant's Humiliation and Reward.* lii. 13—liii. 21.

**A Notable
Poem.**

The most notable poem regarding the Servant, and at the same time one of the most remarkable of all Messianic prophecies, is that contained in Isaiah lii. 13—liii. 12. It is composed of five strophes increasing in length as if to add strength to the growing thought. There are many artistic features in the original Hebrew which can never be produced in English. Some of these are rhythm, rhyme, the stress laid on pronouns, a peculiar wail in certain words for illness, and a deep woe hanging in certain heavy combinations of vowels and consonants, which taken altogether make the Hebrew text remind us of the illimitable possibilities of an instrument of music in the hands of a master. We may quote the passage in the following form:

Behold, my servant shall prosper,
 Shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high.
 Like as many were astonished at thee
 (His visage was so marred more than any man,
 And his form more than the sons of men),
 So shall he startle many nations;
 Kings shall shut their mouths at him:

*A. R. Fausett, following many older commentators, interpreted the passage as the words of the Messiah spoken by anticipation. This is incompatible with verse eight, in which the Servant is "to raise up the land, to make them inherit the desolate heritages," which refers to the return of Israel to Palestine and the re-settlement of the desolate homeland. Efforts to spiritualize such statements so as to suit the Messiah are always insipid. Indeed, throughout verses 9-12 the divine prophecies can apply only to the rescue of the exiles from Babylonia, and can have no natural fitness to Jesus of Nazareth. On the other hand, all is clear and the passage amply Messianic if we understand that the prophet here impersonates Israel in the Exile anticipating her mission from Jehovah including in that mission the work of Christ. In such a forecast, Israel can speak of her call by Jehovah to His service, her very unprofitable work up to the present time, her future labors with the Gentiles, as well as also her return to Palestine with Jehovah's attending care.

For that which had not been told them shall they see;
And that which they had not heard shall they understand.

Who hath believed our message?
And to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed?
For he grew up before him as a tender plant,
And as a root out of a dry ground:
He hath no form nor comeliness;
And when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.
He was despised, and rejected of men;
A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief:
And as one from whom men hide their face he was despised;
And we esteemed him not.

Surely he hath borne our griefs,
And carried our sorrows;
Yet we did esteem him stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted.
But he was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement of our peace was upon him;
And with his stripes we are healed.
All we like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned every one to his own way;
And Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted
He opened not his mouth;
As a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
And as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb,
So he opened not his mouth.
By oppression and judgment he was taken away;
And as for his generation, who among them considered
That he was cut off out of the land of the living
For the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due?
And they made his grave with the wicked,
And with a rich man is his death;
Although he had done no violence,
Neither was any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him;
He hath put him to grief:
When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin,
He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days,
And the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand.
He shall see of the travail of his soul,
And shall be satisfied:
By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many;
And he shall bear their iniquities.
Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great,
And he shall divide the spoil with the strong;
Because he poured out his soul unto death,

And was numbered with the transgressors;
 Yet he bare the sin of many,
 And made intercession for the transgressors.

**A Unique
 Sufferer.**

This climax of prophecies concerning the Servant* in the midst of exhortations to go forth from Babylon and rebuild the wastes of Judah, is singularly free from any local or temporal allusions. It deals only with the suffering Servant and those for whom he suffers. Even all the national elements heretofore connected with the Servant disappear, and he is individualized and set forth in the foreground, the one object of astonishment and admiration. While the suffering suits exilic conditions, when afflictions must have been numerous and varied, there is really no hint that the Servant is a captive himself, or that he represents a captive people. Indeed, his sufferings rise above that of the nation, is more voluntary, ethical and purposeful. He is a redeemer, not even suffering with others, but for them; and his chastisement is not for his own sins, nor to secure his own benefit, but it is for their iniquities, and to gain their peace. The Servant is therefore unique, at once a vicarious victim and a conquering hero, to the exiles a future personality that strangely is acquainted with grief and exalted with prosperity, that pours out his soul in death and yet divides the spoil with the strong. Such a character commands our careful study.

His Exaltation. The exaltation of the Servant is made very emphatic (52:13) by the use of three words in quick succession, "exalted," "lifted up" and "made very high;" by the prominent place of the statement at the opening of the poem; and then by a reannouncement near the close, that he will receive "a portion with the great." The contrast between this exaltation of the Servant and his humiliation is bold and striking, and at the very beginning sets the theme of the whole poem.

*This poem is sometimes named "The Passional," following Polycarp, who called it "the golden passional of the Old Testament evangelist." Urwick esteemed it "the holy of holies of Old Testament prophecy—that sacred chamber wherein are pictured and foretold the sufferings of Christ, and the glories which should follow." *Servant of Jehovah*, p. 65.

This contrast is more than interesting; it is startling. Nations and kings are astounded at what they had never before seen or heard, and they shut their mouths in dumb dismay. The dignity and universal publicity of this exaltation, not to say the international amazement which it excites, mark the person as a most extraordinary character. Such a person has appeared only in the Sufferer of Calvary whose exaltation to the heavens has become the marvel of the ages.

**A Remarkable
Message.**

“Who hath believed our message?” implies that the announcement concerning the exalted Sufferer could hardly be believed; and “to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed?” hints that the experiences of the Sufferer were wrought out under the divine arm, the mysteries of whose work none had been able to penetrate. It is a most notable personage whose work is directed by Jehovah, and concerning whom no man knew what the hand of God was working out. He is above the ordinary man, and his life much more significant than that which is common to human beings.

**Greatness
out of
Obscurity.**

The reason that Jehovah's work in the Servant was unseen, is the fact that he grew up in obscurity and deformity, so that he was unnoticed. Like a “tender plant” or shoot that springs up disregarded while great trees attract the eye, or like one of those succulent roots in a desert that remain filled with fluid while everything about it is parched, so he grows up amid unfavorable conditions, out of the arid soil of a sinful race, from the midst of a people from whom nothing was expected, hence hidden from the world's observation. How fine a parallel is this to the obscurity of One of whom it was said, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” and “Is not this the carpenter's son?” It is the glory and hope of our race that out of such obscurities and humiliations such grandeur and greatness should arise.

**His
Uncomeliness.**

He is not only the great Unknown; he is not even prepossessing when he appears. He does not come with a form or comeliness that is comparable with his merits. This does not mean that the Servant

is to be grossly deformed and repulsive in natural appearance; for that would not allow for that reasonable grace and majesty which necessarily attends a high degree of moral excellence. Yet he is not to make outward manifestation, as if his superiority were of the world; but rather his glory was the gleam of divinity shining through his humility, the halo of a holy character. It is truly suggestive of divine wisdom that the personal appearance of Jesus remains to the church unpictured and undefined, so that each artist, and indeed each soul, may give him the form of his own ideal, that only the excellence of his character be impressed on every mind. He is not intended to present a model figure, but ideal manhood, to man.

His Grief. The repulsiveness of the Servant is due to his being "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." This is not accidental, as if it merely happened that he suffered mistreatment as Israel endured in in exile; but it is divinely intended to reveal to men the ideal man, ready to undergo sorrows and bear burdens, not for himself alone, but especially for others; and more than this, to reveal to us our own impatient and unsympathetic hearts in the presence of suffering and grief. It is when we see Him, the greatest of us all, voluntarily stricken with agonies, that we learn to love a sufferer and have some patience with his misfortune. In Him sorrows are consecrated and glorified till we condemn our former repugnance and coldness of heart, are attracted toward the weak and distressed, and finally like Him offer our passions and lives in their behalf. Such a power for good to humanity have Gethsemane and Calvary proved to be.

The Problem of Suffering. This prophecy is a distinct contribution to the study of suffering, and presents a lofty solution of the problem. Men have regarded suffering in different ways: (1) Some have thought it inexplicable, as when the innocent seem to suffer as greatly as the guilty, the rich as the poor, and the high as the low; hence Job refused the solutions brought by his friends. (2) Some think it the machinery of nature, without moral bearings, except in special cases. (3) Many deem it always a penalty for the sins of the

sufferer, a rod of chastisement held over a sinful race, and instituted in view of the fall of man, to mete out to him the due measures of justice. (4) Others regard it as a warning to follow the necessary laws of our existence, physical and moral, and therefore corrective and reformatory. (5) The prophet in this passage points to the highest ends of suffering when he exhibits its vicarious and redemptive character.

**A Climax
of Value.**

The value of suffering reaches a climax in its redemptive work. The sufferer is farthest removed from selfishness when he offers himself, free and innocent, to endure sorrows for the sins of those who are guilty and deserve the strokes of punishment. In this act he is manifesting the most generous and most sacred impulses of love; for in its sympathy and condescension it represents the divine character. Also such vicarious suffering reaches the conscience of the beneficiary, saves him from a reckless disregard of himself which leads to despair, and incites a love and gratitude in return that ennobles the soul and lays foundations for reform and future loyalty. The thought that another has suffered for my sins exalts my idea of others, makes me hate my sins, and impels me to imitate and serve another more noble and Godlike than myself. Such a moral uplift of heart and life is Messianic.

**The Stroke
for All.**

A remarkable stress is here laid on the words "we," "our" and "us" over against "he" and "him." Evidently "he" is the Servant; but who are "we?" In verse 8, the words "my people" refer to the same ones as "we," and seem to mean Israel; and yet so universal are the conditions and so broad the confession, "All we like sheep have gone astray," that we can hardly doubt that the prophet is speaking for us all. * This is confirmed by the universality of the Servant's ministry in 49:6, "It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light

*Professor Moulton, in *Modern Readers' Bible*, presents the whole of chapter liii as the "chorus of nations" following Jehovah's introduction of His Servant in lii. 13-15.

to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.”

**A Persuasive
Announcement.**

The use of the pronouns sets the work of the Servant in a rare and mellow light that has made this prophecy very precious to all the world. The speaker includes himself among those for whom the Servant is bruised, and freely acknowledges the sins of them all. In this way the announcement of the work of the Servant is also a confession of the sins of the people; and thus also his suffering is made to spring rather out of the human conscience in its need of a redeemer than from the outside divine source. While in fact redemption originates with God unsought by man, there is a peculiar persuasion in the form of the announcement here made; since it brings man, and especially Israel in the Exile, to feel the need of divine help and to have a deeper sense of that sinfulness which must be felt before it can be cured. So perfectly Messianic is the attitude toward sin, that this prophecy reads like strictly Christian literature.

**Concert of
Parties.**

While the announcement seems here to spring from the conscience of man, after all it is Jehovah that has “laid on him the iniquity of us all.” The whole utterance carries with it the assumption that Jehovah is the real author of the sacrifice, and that man did not understand it till expounded in these confessions of the prophet for his people. Still, man’s part in inflicting the wounds is not to be overlooked. He is “rejected of men,” and “they made his grave with the wicked;” yet they did not consider that he was cut off for the transgression of the people. Besides this, the Servant himself has a voluntary part; for “as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth,” which implies that he chose silent submission, and this is confirmed by the words, “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.” Jehovah and his Servant consent together to the suffering for man, who does not at the time understand it; and thus it is implied that the Servant is within the inner counsels of God as his human slayers are not. How perfectly the prophet here forecasts the relations of the Messiah to men and to God!

A Voluntary Sacrifice.

It is not accidental nor arbitrary that "he opened not his mouth;" for a protest would disqualify the Servant from doing the vital work assigned to him. It is often urged as an objection against the principle of a vicarious atonement that it is unjust, that God cannot righteously lay on another the iniquity of any person, and hence that each must suffer for himself. This would have force if the substitute protested; but it is not unjust for the sufferer to make himself an offering for others if he wishes. I may voluntarily pay off my friend's debt, and release him from obligation; but it would be unjust for the court to compel me against my will to pay the debt. If the Servant "opens not his mouth" against his affliction, and seeing the travail of his soul, is "satisfied," the thought of injustice is excluded.

A Doubtful Meaning.

The meaning of the words, "by oppression and judgment he was taken away," is uncertain.

(1) Some translate: "Without hindrance and without right he was taken away;" but "hindrance" is a very doubtful rendering of the original word. The sense that he was slain without any effort to save him, and that this was done wrongfully, is in harmony with the current thought of the passage. (2) The Revised Version in the text has, "By oppression and judgment he was taken away," which means that by wrong, and yet by judicial proceeding, he was put to death. This also fairly well fits the context. (3) The R. V. margin gives, "From oppression and judgment he was taken away," which means that by death he was released from his tormentors, or that God took him out of their hands showing His reversal of their decision against him. While the third view presents a very strong and inviting idea, perhaps the second is in most perfect accord with the thought of the strophe.

The Servant's Ignominy.

The injustice and ignominy of the tragedy in which the Servant is put to death are made emphatic. "He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth," implies that he had done nothing worthy of death by either word or deed. Such wrongs may have been frequent in the Orient, and especially in the Exile, and the

sympathy of the exiles for the Servant was easily enlisted by this circumstance. They also appreciated the meaning of a "grave with the wicked and the rich." The rich in Babylonia were wicked idolators, with whom it was a disgrace for an Israelite to be buried; and thus the Servant is to die and be buried in dishonor. We are not at liberty to refer to the burial of Jesus in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea (Matt. 27: 57), which was no discredit; but we may cite as the parallel to this prophecy the death of Jesus as a criminal, executed between two robbers, and the cross to which shame always deeply attached.

**The Pleasure
of Jehovah.**

That "it pleased Jehovah to bruise him," is not said to convey the idea that Jehovah delights in torture, or that He is appeased like heathen gods with agonies and bloody offerings, which is contrary to the teaching of prophets and apostles in every age of biblical literature; but it means that this gift of life is designed to accomplish the high ends of infinite love for man, to redeem the lost and helpless, and that in a way which would commend Jehovah most to the hearts of men through all time.

**Special
Reasons.**

There are special reasons why this sacrifice should be pleasing to Jehovah: (1) The victim is innocent; and since he does not deserve death for his own sin, he may offer his life for others. (2) The Servant makes a voluntary offering, knowing its purpose, and devoting himself to that end out of unselfish love; and hence he is not, as the ox which dies at the altar, without moral worth and with no outpour of love with the life. (3) He is deemed sufficient to atone for sin, and here the exaltation of the Servant prepares us to appreciate his work: for if he were no more than an ox or lamb, the sense of mankind could never rest in the belief that he made an atonement worthy of respect. It may be a question whether, if he were only a man, however innocent, his death could ever be regarded by the most thoughtful of men as in any sense properly offsetting the sins of all generations. His exaltation and work here hint to us that he may be more than human. (4) He becomes the only adequate expression of divine love reaching down to lift up fallen man of which we can conceive; for even a man's love will sometimes prompt a sacrifice of life, and God commends

His supreme love by His supreme offering, and that means the deepest sorrow and greatest loss in keeping with His divine character. Our highest conception of divine sacrifice is here depicted, and there is no other prophetic utterance in which we read in clearer light the matchless character of our God. Certainly nothing of all this is lacking in the death of Christ as set forth in the New Testament.

**Meaning
of the
Gift.**

We may not regard the vicarious gift as necessarily an unconditional benefit to all men, so that it becomes such an absolute substitution as that men are absolved from guilt, even while they remain in rebellion to Jehovah, which would be a moral absurdity; and indeed the prophet predicts no more than that he will "justify many." We should note that here the death is not mere martyrdom, not merely a miscarriage of justice; neither is it simply an appeal to human sympathy, as if God were making a show of love only to draw out the love of men. It is far more than any or all of these. He "makes his soul an offering for sin;" "the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." There is nothing short of a vicarious atonement in this, a lifting of the load of guilt upon bruised shoulders, a crushing of the heart of the Servant, that our sin-sickened souls may find healing. This is the idea of the Messiah, "to give his life a ransom for many." Matt. 20:28.

**A Future
Life.**

The resurrection of the Servant from the dead is not distinctly affirmed, but seems to be clearly implied. He "poured out his soul unto death; and yet "he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand." Although "cut off," he is to have a posterity, which we must regard a "spiritual seed," like that of Abraham (Rom. 4:14-16; Gal. 3:7, 29). His days are prolonged indefinitely, as if an unlimited future opened up before him; and the announcement that he is to "divide the spoil with the strong," indicates that it is to be a most honored and victorious future. Our risen Messiah does not more than fulfil the wondrous reach of this prediction.

**Who the
Servant?**

After the above survey of the character and work of the Servant, it is important to inquire, Who is this Servant? Since the Servant has already in previous passages been called Israel, it is probable that the early Jew supposed that this poem also related to the nation; and this seems the more likely from the interpolation of the name "Israel" in 42:1 in the LXX. Also the context before and after this passage appears to refer to the nation, while the main task of the prophet in this part of his work is to encourage his people with a great national hope. Besides this, it is not an individual, but the nation which the prophets usually represent as a sufferer, while the prophetic individual is usually a king and a conqueror. On the other hand, (1) we note that prophecy drifts from the royal nation to the royal person, from the priestly nation to the priestly person, and so it may proceed from the suffering nation to the suffering person. (2) If the Servant be the nation, those for whom he suffers must be the Gentile world, which does not suit the pronoun "we" nor the expression "my people." (3) The nation does not die nor rise from the dead; for the exilic death and resurrection (Ezek. 37:1-12; Hos. 13:14) did not "justify many," as this prophecy assumes. (4) The nation could not attain to the office described in this prediction, which is personal throughout. (5) The nation could not be persuaded to endure such agonies without protest, nor was it at any time free from violence and deceit. The present passage, therefore, must have a personal element, that was partly developed in former predictions of the Servant.

**The Nation
Interested.**

Some hold that only the faithful portion of Israel is meant, but most of the arguments just given apply against this view also. There is an individuality in this description that neither the nation nor any nucleus of the nation could be reasonably supposed by the prophet to fulfil. Ultimately the prophecy must rest on a person, and any other interpretation must prove unable to shake off its weakness and embarrassments. But this does not mean that the nation is an uninterested party to the prophecy; for it is here given evidently for the encouragement and discipline of Israel.

The Servant is unquestionably connected with Israel, and is destined to accomplish national service in behalf of the race; and the intimate relation of the Servant prophecies with each other more than suggests that in his exaltation the nation is to secure triumph and final glory.

**The Nation
Represented.**

If the Servant is to consummate Israel's high ends under Jehovah's direction, it follows that the Servant must in some way represent the nation, indeed, must be one of the nation, assuming the task appointed to him by Jehovah. His work may be for Israel and at the same time for the Gentiles. Some (e. g., Skinner, Com. on Isaiah) suppose him to be the "ideal Israel," "a personification of Israel as it exists in the mind and purpose of God;" but an ideal nation is not a person, as the Servant becomes in this passage. While the Servant in chapters xlii and xliii is the nation, and in xlix the spiritual part of Israel, here Jehovah's work is laid on an individual, who is of the nation, operating for the nation and fulfilling the highest functions of the nation in the world. Such a person in Hebrew thought can be no other than the son of David, the Prince of Peace.

The Messiah.

The Jewish rabbis in the earlier times, and many even since the Christian period began, when not confronted with the Christian argument for the Messiahship of Jesus based on the passage, have regarded this prophecy as Messianic. Since the purpose of Jehovah has been made more plain by its development in Christ, believers in his divine mission have held in all confidence that the prophecy could relate to no other person.* Almost all of it describes closing scenes in the life of Christ and his exaltation. It covers the deepest spring of divine help for man, the principle of unselfish sacrifice of life for those who are loved and lost, a principle that was

*George Rawlinson gives the following history: "The Messianic interpretation of the chapter was universally acknowledged by the Jews until the time of Aben Ezra (about 1150 A. D.). It was also assumed as indisputable by the Christian Fathers. Almost all Christian expositors down to the commencement of the nineteenth century took the same view. It was only under the pressure of Christian controversy that the later Jews abandoned the traditional interpretation, and applied the prophecy (1) to Jeremiah; (2) to Josiah; (3) to the people of Israel. In the present century a certain number of commentators have adopted

least understood when Jesus died, one farthest removed from natural expectation, and yet most essentially related to the divine government. It can be no accident that the prophet has here touched the most vital and most hidden truth in the whole Christian economy.

Section IV. Prophecies of Reformation.

1. *The Free Invitation. Isa. lv.*

Connection
with the
Servant.

It is remarkable that after the great message in chapters lii and liii, nothing more is said in the book of Isaiah concerning the "Servant of Jehovah." In that poem the depth of his humiliation and the height of his exaltation were touched, and the prophet pauses, since with so profound a theme he can advance no farther. The following chapters, therefore, seem to relate to a different subject; and yet the author has not left his work without a thread of connection. In closing chapter liv, he says, "This is the heritage of the servants of Jehovah;" and thus quietly he passes from the Servant to the "servants," who are the "seed" whom the Servant saw, and for whom he endured the travail of his soul and was satisfied. These are now the objects of his prophetic attention, and to these the following invitation is extended:

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,
And he that hath no money;
Come ye, buy, and eat;
Yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.
Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?
And your labor for that which satisfieth not?
Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good,
And let your soul delight itself in fatness.

Incline your ear, and come unto me;
Hear, and your soul shall live;
And I will make an everlasting covenant with you,
Even the sure mercies of David.
Behold, I have given him for a witness to the peoples,
A leader and commander to the peoples.

one or other of the late Jewish theories, either absolutely or with modifications * * * * * The Messianic interpretation is maintained among moderns, by Hengstenberg, Keil, Umbreit, Oehler, Delitzsch, Kay, Cheyne, Henderson, Alexander, Urwick, and others."

Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not;
 And a nation that knew not thee shall run unto thee,
 Because of Jehovah, thy God,
 And for the Holy One of Israel;
 For he hath glorified thee.

Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found;
 Call ye upon him while he is near;
 Let the wicked forsake his way,
 And the unrighteous man his thoughts;
 And let him return unto Jehovah,
 And he will have mercy upon him;
 And to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
 Neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah.
 For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
 So are my ways higher than your ways,
 And my thoughts than your thoughts.
 For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven,
 And returneth not thither, but watereth the earth,
 And maketh it bring forth and bud,
 And giveth seed to the sower and bread to the eater;
 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth:
 It shall not return unto me void,
 But it shall accomplish that which I please,
 And it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

For ye shall go out with joy,
 The mountains and hills shall break forth before you into singing;
 And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
 Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree;
 And instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree.
 And it shall be to Jehovah for a name,
 For an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.—Isa. lv.

**Suited
 to the
 Captivity.**

This prophecy is evidently intended to supply hope and comfort to the exiles in Babylonia; for they "shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace." The invitation, whatever may be its ultimate significance, since it is addressed to those that thirst and labor without satisfaction, is adapted to attract the attention of the Hebrew toilers on the heated plains of Mesopotamia. The promised covenant also is suited to offer a new prospect

to a people who for years have been deprived of covenant relation with the God of their fathers. Besides this, the assurance here given that the word of Jehovah will not become void nor fail of its accomplishment, is adapted to the struggling faith of the exiles who had in some measure cast upon Jehovah the blame for their captivity. This prophecy must therefore be studied in the setting of exilic conditions.

**The
Invitation.**

The invitation to come to the waters and to buy wine and milk without money and without price evidently means more than merely a call to material blessings; and this is the more certain because of the reference in the final verse of the preceding chapter to the "heritage of the servants of Jehovah and their righteousness," which Jehovah says proceeds from Him. This implies that Jehovah is prepared to meet a thirsting and hungering after righteousness, and that this is the free blessing which no money can buy. Especial emphasis is laid upon the value of this divine gift by contrasting it with the unsatisfying results of the hard labor in which the people are engaged.

**The Everlasting
Covenant.**

An everlasting covenant is proposed by Jehovah to take the place of that compact with their ancestors at Mount Sinai, which had been broken by the faithlessness of the nation. The new covenant will not be made with the nation, so that it may perish by some national defection or disaster; but it will be made with the individual. "Every one that thirsteth" may drink these waters of covenantal grace. Neither will this covenant look back to the deliverance from Egypt, nor to the giving of the law on Sinai; but it will be based upon the "sure mercies of David" by which Jehovah promised unconditionally that the throne and kingdom should endure forever. Built upon such an imperishable foundation, it can never fail by the delinquency of some leader or the downfall of an unfaithful state.

**David
as a
Witness.**

As a part of this covenant, Jehovah announces that he has made David "for a witness to the people;" which means that Jehovah has determined that His faithfulness to David shall be a

testimony to those who enter into this covenant that through them Jehovah is accomplishing His long-cherished and unchangeable purpose to maintain among men a kingdom that cannot be overthrown. Such a testimony cannot be given by that king David who succeeded Saul on the throne of the kingdom of Israel and who has been dead nearly half a millennium when this prophecy is announced to the exiles; but that David is to be projected into the future and reappear in the person of the Messiah, and in him by the fulfilment of every word spoken by Jehovah to the great ancestor will unquestioned testimony be given.

**The David
of
Prophecy.**

It is a part of this same determination in the mind of Jehovah to make David a "prince and commander to the peoples." Some interpreters hold that the perfect tense of the verb in the Hebrew text of verse 4 implies that the David here mentioned is the historic king of the past, and that the prediction begins with the next verse where future verbs are used; but this argument is fully offset by the probability that the perfect tense denotes merely the divine purpose already formed concerning the leader and commander, and that the future tenses appropriately refer to certain results that are later to be manifested. The covenant loses a large degree of its strength and value if simply the historic David be understood; for the fact that he has been a leader and commander could be of little importance in framing a covenant which is to extend to the distant future. On the other hand, if we regard the name David here as not only including the king of former years, but also his royal posterity culminating in the Messiah, the entire promise here becomes intelligible and attractive. Jehovah will surely execute His promise to perpetuate David on the throne, to establish for him a kingdom; and He now proposes to the exiles that on the basis of this promise to David, He will make them sharers of that everlasting dominion. Indeed, these people are not merely to partake of the blessings of the covenant with David, and thus simply enjoy certain benefits of David's unending reign, but they are to enter into his covenant, to become identified with him in the royal honors which

he shall never forfeit.* It is only as men have part in the Messianic covenant, and come into Christ, that they become heirs of Davidic glories and secure that unfading crown which was promised only to his household.

**The Leader
and
Commander.**

As a consequence of this covenant, Jehovah promises that some personage whom he addresses by the significant "thou" shall call a nation hitherto unknown, and that a nation which hitherto knew him not shall run unto him, because of Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel. The persons to whom the covenant is offered are addressed throughout this prophecy by the plural "ye" both before and after this remarkable apostrophe. Since it is David who is to be a "leader and commander to the peoples," it can in all reason be no other than he who shall call an unknown nation and to whom a nation now foreign shall be attracted; but since this David is here regarded as projected into the indefinite future, it can be only the Davidic Messiah that shall invite the Gentile world to partake with himself in the "sure mercies" vouchsafed by Jehovah.

**The Terms of
the Covenant.**

The terms of this covenant are very simple, but distinctly announced in this prophecy. Those who will form this covenant with Jehovah must seek Him while He may be found, and call upon Him while He is near. Besides this, the wicked must forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts. From this it is clear that he must become a devout worshipper of Jehovah, and must by repentance, put away the sinful deeds and unholy thoughts of his past life. Thus by a double change of heart, a detachment from the evil deeds and thoughts of the world and an attachment to the God of righteousness and mercy, the man of a wayward life, even though he be a stranger to the faith of the Hebrews, shall enter with them into the perpetual covenant and pardoning mercies of Jehovah. The necessity for this repentance lies in

*This identification of persons from without a family with the household is not foreign to Hebrew thought; for thus those who were bought by Abraham's money became a part of his family (Gen. 17:12,13). In the same manner Gentiles that have faith in Christ are called sons of Abraham (Gal. 3:7).

the fact that those who enter into so close a relation with Jehovah must have a character like His own; and His ways and thoughts are far above those which attend a sinful life. Yet it need not be doubted that Jehovah will abundantly pardon him whose ways and thoughts have been far beneath the divine model; for although the condescension may seem very great, nevertheless, Jehovah has spoken, like the rain and the snow that fails not to water the earth, His word of promise does not go forth in vain, but accomplishes that for which it has been uttered.

**Material
Benefits.**

One especial blessing shall come to Israel by the acceptance of this invitation to enter into Jehovah's covenant, and that is a joyful return from the Exile and a notable change of barren lands and sterile trees into fruitfulness and beauty. Jehovah will follow His people with material benefits as well as sacred privileges. And this very transformation of want into abundance shall be a monument to the honor of Jehovah's name. It is in the Messianic age especially that there have been most opportunities to observe to what extent a godly character contributes to personal prosperity and in how many ways it is demonstrated that righteousness exalts a nation.

**Messianic
Features.**

The Messianic features of this prophecy seem to be, (1) a proclamation shall go forth from Jehovah inviting those who hunger and thirst after waters that fail not and meat that perishes not, to come to Him and purchase a perfect satisfaction of soul without money and without price; (2) a covenant offered by Jehovah on the sure foundation of Davidic promises and laden with Davidic glories; (3) the testimony of the future David, together with his leadership and command as a part of the covenantal blessing; (4) the call of a foreign people to the Davidic ruler; (5) a requirement of repentance and devotion to Jehovah as conditions of the sacred covenant; and (6) a bountiful yield of blessing from nature as a reward of faithful service to God. It is hardly reasonable that all these items should perfectly suit the Messianic announcements and yet have no Messianic significance.

2. *The Rich Reward. Isa. lviii.***The
Occasion.**

The occasion of this prophecy was the sinfulness of the people whom the prophet was seeking to reform. According to the accusations made against them in the earlier verses of the chapter, they offered their daily sacrifices, observed their regular feasts and assumed every appearance of devout worshipers, but in fact their lives were disgraced with contentions, profanations of the sabbath and disregard of the needs of the poor. The effort of the prophet is to rebuke this formality and hypocrisy by declaring that worship under such conditions has no acceptance with Jehovah. Laying his emphasis chiefly upon their fasts, which were especially designed to win divine favor, the prophet points out the fatal inconsistency of such worship with their wicked lives, and follows this with advices of reformation and promises of reward. In the following verses (5-14) his leading thought is presented:

Is such the fast that I have chosen?
 The day for a man to afflict his soul?
 Is it to bow down his head as a rush,
 And to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?
 Wilt thou call this a fast,
 And an acceptable day to Jehovah?

Is not this the fast that I have chosen:
 To loose the bonds of wickedness,
 To undo the bands of the yoke,
 And to let the oppressed go free,
 And that ye break every yoke?
 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry,
 And that thou bring the poor that are cast out of the house?
 When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him;
 And that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

Then shall thy light break forth as the morning,
 And thy healing shall spring forth speedily;
 And thy righteousness shall go before thee;
 The glory of Jehovah shall be thy rearward.
 Then shalt thou call, and Jehovah will answer;
 Thou shalt cry, and he will say, Here I am.

If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke,
 The putting forth of the finger, and speaking wickedly;
 And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry,
 And satisfy the afflicted soul:

Then shall thy light rise in darkness,
 And thine obscurity be as the noonday;
 And Jehovah will guide thee continually,
 And satisfy thy soul in dry places,
 And make strong thy bones;
 And thou shalt be like a watered garden,
 And like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.
 And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places;
 Thou shalt raise up the foundation of many generations;
 And thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach,
 The restorer of paths to dwell in.

If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath,
 From doing thy pleasure on my holy day;
 And call the sabbath a delight,
 And the holy of Jehovah honorable;
 And shalt honor it, not doing thine own ways,
 Nor finding thine own pleasure,
 Nor speaking thine own words:
 Then shalt thou delight thyself in Jehovah;
 And I will make thee to ride upon the high places of the earth;
 And I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father:
 For the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.

The Fasts.

The prophet speaks of the fasting of his people as if they were observing voluntary fasts with the intent to secure the favor of Jehovah, but there was only one fast day in the year prescribed in the Mosaic law, the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:29). It is certain, however, that spontaneous fasts were sometimes held, especially on occasions of distress and need of divine help (Jud. 20:26; 1 Sam. 7:6; et al.). It is known also that just after the Exile four annual fasts were observed (Zech. 8:19); and the traditions of the Jewish Talmud refer these fasts to various disasters connected with the fall of Jerusalem. While we cannot be sure whether these or special fasts are the occasion of the prophet's discourse, it is evident that such devotions were spurned by Jehovah, not because they were not commanded, but because they were attended with disobedience and hypocrisy.

The Rewards of Character.

The true rewards of divine service are available only to an unselfish character; and this is made apparent by the charges against the exiles that they did not offer freedom to the oppressed, did not break the yoke of tyranny, did not feed the hungry and house the poor.

When they shall do these charitable deeds out of genuine sympathy for their fellow men, Jehovah will cause the morning of national liberty to dawn upon His people, will make His glory to shine upon them, and answer their cries of distress. He promises that Israel, if she will cultivate such humanitarian instincts, shall be made like a watered garden or an unfailing spring; and more than this, they shall rebuild the old ruins, relay the old foundations, and be noted as the restorers of forsaken paths. Some such reformation and restoration are the necessary precursors of the Messianic era.

**The Heritage
of Jacob.**

In every generation Jehovah uses some command as a test of loyalty to Himself; and in that age the sabbath was such a test. The unfaithful exiles had trampled it under foot, and were now urged to "turn the foot" from it, and to cease to do as they pleased on that holy day. If the people will meet this sacred test, Jehovah will exalt them to high places and feed them with "the heritage of Jacob." Jacob's heritage, according to Gen. 28:13, 14, consisted of three elements, (1) the possession of the land of Palestine, (2) an innumerable posterity, and (3) through his seed the blessing of the earth. This heritage was fraught with a fulness of Messianic hope, and so the present prophecy is intended to secure the same great Messianic ends.

3. *The Divine Interposition. Isa. lix. 15-21.*

**Form of
the Message.**

Chapter lix bears a tone similar to chapter lviii, except that Israel's sins are sounded forth with greater emphasis, and Jehovah's part in their salvation is put in a more dramatic form. The message is in three parts. First, in direct address, the prophet accuses the people of murder, falsehood, dishonesty and false pleading, adding that "they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity; they hatch adder's eggs, and weave the spider's web; and he that eateth of their eggs dieth; and that which is crushed breaketh out in a viper." This reminds one of the "Great Arraignment" in the first chapter of Isaiah. Secondly, by the indirect plan of identifying himself with the people, the prophet confesses their

sins as if he were guilty with the rest, and by their iniquity accounts for their disasters and the delay of salvation. And, thirdly, in verses 15-21 quoted below, Jehovah is represented as an armed warrior; and because no human intercessor can be found for them, undertakes their deliverance.

And Jehovah saw it,
And it displeased him that there was no justice.
And he saw that there was no man,
And wondered that there was no intercessor;
Therefore his own arm brought salvation unto him;
And his righteousness, it upheld him.
And he put on righteousness as a breastplate,
And a helmet of salvation upon his head;
And he put on garments of vengeance for clothing,
And was clad with zeal as a mantle.

According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay,
Wrath to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies;
To the islands he will repay recompense.
So shall they fear the name of Jehovah from the west,
And his glory from the rising of the sun;
For he will come as a rushing stream,
Which the breath of Jehovah driveth.

And a redeemer shall come to Zion
And to them that turn from sin in Jacob, saith Jehovah.
And as for me, this is my covenant with them, saith Jehovah;
My spirit that is upon thee,
And my words which I have put into thy mouth,
Shall not depart out of thy mouth,
Nor out of the mouth of thy seed,
Nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed,
Saith Jehovah, from henceforth and for ever.

Jehovah
as
Champion.

The poet-prophet pictures the moral condition of Israel as desperate and helpless; for either for lack of ability or want of courage, no man is prepared to intercede with God, as did Moses of old, and bring deliverance. The state is more hopeless than the bondmen in Egypt; and if Jehovah will save His people, He Himself must become the champion of their cause. While this is doubtless rhetorical, and not intended to imply that there was not one faithful man in the Exile, it presents a vivid, flashlight view of the undone state of the captive people. Not less striking is the

figure of Jehovah in garments of vengeance and raiment of zeal, first smiting down the adversaries, and then redeeming Jacob.

The Redeemer. The Redeemer that is here promised is by implication identified with the Messiah by the Apostle Paul (Rom. 11:26, 27), and this has good reason, since no human deliverer could be found, and a divine One has undertaken Israel's salvation. It is in the person of the Messiah that Jehovah engages in the redemptive task; and it is only through him that He reaches the east and the west, and brings men of all lands to fear Him. The rescue of the Jews from Exile did not in itself contemplate such results, and supplied no means adequate to such an accomplishment.

The Covenant. The covenant which is announced in the closing strophe is made with the people, and not with the prophet, as some have thought; for on this point the plural "them" is decisive. This covenant includes the gift of the Holy Spirit and the abiding influence of Jehovah's word, which signifies the perpetual sovereignty of Jehovah in heart and life. The change to the singular "thee" does not indicate merely a prophetic gift which the people should not enjoy; for it is to be handed down from generation to generation, which is a thought foreign to the Old Testament succession of prophets. The change is an effort to secure greater rhetorical vigor by a transition to the direct discourse. Such a covenant implies knowledge, righteousness, moral freedom (2 Cor. 3:17) and co-operation with Jehovah. Thus combines exalted character with exalted privilege, a marked contrast with the iniquity and humiliation of the exiles.

4. *The Minister of Grace. Isa. lxi.*

The Message. In this very beautiful and remarkable prophecy the speaker describes in the first strophe the offices of his gracious ministry, to give relief, liberty and comfort to those of his people who were in conditions of distress. In the second strophe he predicts the rebuilding of Israel's ruined cities, the restoration of her desolated lands, the renewal of her national honor and the formation of an everlasting cov-

enant between her and Jehovah. In the third strophe he impersonates Israel as rejoicing in these promises and prospects, admiring herself clothed with salvation and righteousness as a bridegroom decked with a garland or a bride adorned with jewels, and comparing herself to a fertile garden as she brings forth righteousness and praise to Jehovah. The ideal character of the message is implied in its poetic form.

The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me;
 For Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek;
 He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted,
 To proclaim liberty to the captives,
 And the opening of the prison to them that are bound;
 To proclaim the year of Jehovah's favor,
 And the day of vengeance of our God;
 To comfort all that mourn;
 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion,
 To give unto them a garland for ashes,
 The oil of joy for mourning,
 The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;
 That they may be called trees of righteousness,
 The planting of Jehovah, that he may be glorified.

And they shall build the old wastes,
 They shall raise up the former desolations,
 And they shall repair the waste cities,
 The desolations of many generations.
 And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks,
 And foreigners shall be your ploughmen and your vine-dressers.
 But ye shall be named the priests of Jehovah;
 Men shall call you the ministers of our God;
 Ye shall eat the wealth of the nations,
 And in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.
 Instead of your shame ye shall have double;
 And instead of dishonor they shall rejoice in their portion:
 Therefore in their land they shall possess double;
 Everlasting joy shall be unto them.
 For I, Jehovah, love justice,
 I hate robbery and iniquity;
 And I will give them their recompense in truth,
 And I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
 And their seed shall be known among the nations,
 All that see them shall acknowledge them,
 That they are the seed which Jehovah hath blessed.

I will greatly rejoice in Jehovah,
 My soul shall be joyful in my God;
 For he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation,
 He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness,

As a bridegroom decketh himself with a garland,
 And as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.
 For as the earth bringeth forth its bud,
 And as a garden causeth the things sown in it to spring forth;
 So the Lord Jehovah will cause righteousness and praise
 To spring forth before all nations.

The Speaker. Many scholars have debated with some ardor whether the speaker in the first strophe is the prophet himself or the Servant of Jehovah, the Messiah. It is urged, (1) that the prophet does not usually speak of himself at length, but rather keeps himself in the background; (2) that where another than Jehovah speaks of his work for men, it is the Servant, as in Isa. 49:1-6; 50:4-9; (3) that the offices here presented are those of the Servant as described in previous passages; and (4) that it is hardly reasonable to expect that after a direct and dramatic introduction of the Servant, the prophet would thrust himself into the foreground and assume the role of that divine Hero.* On the other hand, it is said, (1) that it is not improper or uncommon for the prophets to refer freely to their own work, and that this one does so in the beginning of the very next chapter (lxii); (2) that in xlvi. 16, the prophet speaks of his own mission, and, as here, refers to the Spirit and to Jehovah for authority; (3) that here the speaker is only a proclaimer of liberty and comfort, not as the Servant, a mediator and redeemer; and (4) that it is highly improbable that after the work of the Servant has been presented in so deep and lofty reaches of humility and service, he would be again set forth in a confessedly subordinate position.

His Relation to Jesus. The fact that Jesus read a portion of this prophecy in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4:18-21), and said that it was that day fulfilled, implies but little respecting the question who the preacher in

*For the elaboration and defense of these points, see Commentary on Isaiah by Delitzsch. Canon George Rawlinson (Pulpit Commentary) says: "The words of our Lord in Luke iv. 21, 'this day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears,' preclude the application of this passage to any other than the Lord himself. It is simply astonishing that some Christian Commentators (Ewald, Hitzig, Knobel) have not seen the force of this argument; but, with the Jews, imagine the prophet to be speaking of his own ministry."

the prediction was. Since Jesus was doing a work similar to that herein described, he was fulfilling the utterance, whether the prophet ever performed such a task or not. If the prophet meant himself, he was a type of Jesus, and the passage here is a typical prophecy. If this be true, it will account for the lack of anything supernatural in the work and for its perfect adaptation to the times when Israel was about to return to Palestine from the Captivity. It is worthy of note that the second strophe refers distinctly to the rebuilding of the desolated places in Judea and to a revival of national position and renown. Every allusion to captives, bondage, mourning, foreigners, the wealth of nations and the seed which Jehovah hath blessed, well suits the exilic times, and well describes the field of prophetic labor. It is a far better typical than literal description of the sphere of Jesus' activities.

Extent of the Typology. The typology is by no means exhausted in the similarity of the work of the prophet and that of Jesus; for the nation in captivity had many conditions which sadly enough prefigured the weaknesses and woes, physical and moral, which appeared among the people with whom the Savior lived and labored. The prophet saw Israel in prison, in serfdom, in poverty, in mourning, and in great discouragements, and proclaimed their deliverance; while Jesus found men imprisoned in sins, enslaved in traditions, grieved with disease and death, untaught and almost bereft of Messianic hope. Indeed, the whole world was waiting and longing for a deliverer from ills and evils for which only the divine healer could supply a remedy. The wastes and desolations of human obliquity in every generation demand a great proclaimer and leader of restoration. It is not strange, therefore, that scholars doubt whom the prophet means when in presenting his own duties he so perfectly forecasts the mission of his illustrious successor.

The Year of Jehovah's Favor. To understand the speaker's mission "to proclaim the year of Jehovah's favor," we must remember that in the forty-ninth year, in the seventh month, on the day of atonement, according to the Hebrew law, heralds were to go through the land with trumpets to announce the incoming of the year of jubilee, when every slave

should go free, and every family that in poverty had lost their home should return to it in peace (Lev. 25:8-28). Thus the prophet was to proclaim in the Exile "the year of Jehovah's favor," when the bound should be free and the exile go home. Of this also Jesus could announce a rich fulfilment in that time when Messianic favor, like the long-wished jubilee, was come at last with its offers of release and its return to the divine inheritance.

**Priests and
Ministers.**

In the Exile the Jews were debased by a people that served false gods, and whose priests were supported and honored, while the Jews were despised for their devotion to Jehovah; but the time was at hand when the Jews would be served by foreigners who should be taught the worship of the true God, and regard the Jews as their priests and ministers. This is another Messianic forecast; and, indeed, it is chiefly in the work of presenting the great world sacrifice and proclaiming to mankind the way to divine acceptance, that the Jews have risen to an international supremacy. Possibly the prophet may have thought only of the reverses of national fortune as the Exile closed, and that he spoke more wisely than he knew; but the divine purpose is to us now unmistakable.

**The Portion
and Covenant.**

When the exiles were to return to their country, as a reward for their sorrows, they should receive a double possession. This means that instead of their poverty, they were to have a firstborn's share, twice as much as others. God loves justice, and will therefore overthrow the oppressor and give faithful Judah a compensation for her losses. This is connected with a promise of a new and perpetual covenant; and this implies that the reward will come with the making of such a compact. This leads us to look for the rich inheritance in the Messianic age; when in fellowship with Christ blessings are bestowed that infinitely transcend in value the fortunes of heathen kingdoms.

**Israel's
Rejoicing.**

A prospect of so great blessings from Jehovah as those set forth in this oracle ought to move the nation to the heartiest rejoicings; and if they do not themselves have faith enough to break forth into thanksgiving, the prophet, as the preacher of his time, should

lead the people in praise, and voice the appropriate word of appreciation. Salvation and righteousness are the two notes of emphasis; and these two are most vital to a nation exiled on account of transgression. Who can measure the joy of a people that have suffered long the cruelties of tyrants and taskmasters, when they are about to escape from thralldom and to receive "a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and robes of praise for the spirit of heaviness?" How much more should men now rejoice as they secure under the loving Messiah their freedom from guilt with an assurance of their eternal inheritance!

5. *The Way of Holiness.* Isa. xxxv.

Connection. It is evident that this chapter has no connection with that which follows, which relates the invasion of Sennacherib; but some hold that it is joined logically with the doom of Edom, which immediately precedes it. Possibly the two chapters stand to each other in the attitude of intended contrast, as expressed by Delitzsch: "Edom has fallen, never again to rise. Its land is changed into a terrible desert; the desert, on the contrary, through which ransomed Israel returns home, into a blooming field." But against this view stands a serious objection, that the present chapter does not mention, much less emphasize, Israel, as such a contrast would seem to require; but from the first verse on, assumes an independent setting. It appears much more natural to associate this prophecy with chapters lxi and lxii, which are replete with similar promises, and contemplate a like environment.

Implied Conditions. The conditions of the people of whom the prophet writes are not expressed, but are unmistakably implied. They are "weak," "fearful," in "sorrow and sighing;" and about to be "ransomed," to "return, and come with singing unto Zion." Add to these allusions the presence of the desert and the need of a highway, and the circumstances of the exiles at the close of the Babylonian period are sufficiently evident. The weakness and hesitancy of the people to whom a return to Palestine was proposed by the prophets, must be overcome; and the dread of the desert through which they must pass and of the desolate land on their arrival

must be removed, before the exiles will consent to hazard such an undertaking. The prophet assures them that Jehovah will dissolve all difficulties before them, will turn the fearful wilderness into a garden of fertility, and transform the trackless waste of sand into a highway favored with pools and streams of water. It is an attractive, poetic expression of Jehovah's readiness to protect and sustain His people in one of their most trying experiences. The poetic form may be seen in the following arrangement of the message:

The wilderness and arid land shall be glad;
And the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose.
It shall blossom abundantly,
And rejoice even with joy and singing;
The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it,
The excellency of Carmel and Sharon;
They shall see the glory of Jehovah,
The excellency of our God.

Strengthen ye the weak hands,
And confirm the feeble knees.
Say to them that are of a fearful heart,
Be strong, fear not;
Behold, your God will come with vengeance,
With the recompense of God;
He will come and save you.

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.
Then shall the lame man leap as a hart,
And the tongue of the dumb shall sing;
For in the wilderness shall waters break out,
And streams in the desert.
And the glowing sands shall become a pool,
And the thirsty ground springs of water:
In the habitation of jackals, where they lay,
Shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

And a highway shall be there, and a way,
And it shall be called the Way of Holiness.
The unclean shall not pass over it,
Nor shall it be for them;*

*The American Standard Version translates these lines thus: "But it shall be for the redeemed: the wayfaring men, yea fools, shall not err therein." A literal of the Hebrew is, "And it is for them; and a goer of way and fools shall not err" (or wander). Probably the first clause should have the negative carried over from the preceding clause. A careful collation of negative Hebrew sentences shows that in the

The wayfarer and fools shall not wander there;
 No lion shall be there,
 Nor shall any ravenous beast go up thereon;
 They shall not be found there:
 But the redeemed shall walk there;
 And the ransomed of Jehovah shall return,
 And come with singing unto Zion;
 And everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
 They shall obtain gladness and joy,
 And sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

**Prominence
 of
 Jehovah.**

Set in the foreground of every scene in this poem is Jehovah as the author of transformation and the object of Israel's devotion. If the people are to behold the desert crowned with "the glory of Lebanon" and "the excellency of Carmel," it is only that therein may be reflected "the glory of Jehovah, the excellency of our God." If the weak are to be strengthened, and the timid encouraged, they are animated with the promise, "your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God." If their misfortunes and afflictions are to be healed, and a highway be opened for the redeemed, it is all because "the ransomed of Jehovah shall return." This suggests that the prophet esteemed Israel's supreme need to be a stronger confidence in Jehovah and a clearer vision of His saving help.

**The Ideal
 Future.**

If a literal interpretation is to be placed on this prophecy, it certainly anticipates a marvelous change in nature and among men; and it can be fulfilled only by a series of miracles such as were not even wrought by the Savior and his apostles. They did, indeed, heal a few blind, deaf and lame; but they did not cause waters to break out in a wilderness, streams to gush forth in a desert, glow-

majority of cases the negative word is repeated if the writer desired to carry the negative idea to a second word or clause; yet in some well marked instances (e. g., Gen. 45:6; 1 Sam. 2:3; Ps. 9:19) the negative word is not repeated in the added member of the sentence, but is understood. Here between two negative clauses, an affirmative is out of place; and the Am. Revisers insert the word "redeemed" to make sense, when a negative understood makes a much better connection and correlation of thought. The word "wander" as well represents the Hebrew verb as "err," and far better suits the trend of thought, in which is first given a list of objects excluded from the highway, and then those admitted to it. Compare Briggs' Mes. Proph., p. 319.

ing sand to become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water. We have no record that such things have been literally performed by any person; and we are not told that the return of Israel from Babylon was marked by any of these supernatural events. It is necessary to conclude that it was not the divine intention to fulfil the prediction literally, but that the author painted on the prophetic canvass an ideal picture, just as a poet, an orator, or a reformer describes an ideal character or state of society which he knows will be only partially realized.

**A Divine
Ideal.**

In the present case it is some embarrassment to our appreciation of an ideal message that it is God, not men, whose works are idealized, and we should expect Him to fulfil the most perfect ideal. But we must remember that God can deal with men only as they deserve or are prepared to receive, and that He will not waste His work on the obstinate and unresponsive. If it were a matter of divine character or personal perfections, we might be sure that no picture could overreach the reality; but here the message relates to the rewards which Jehovah would gladly bestow upon an ideal people, and these are put in material forms where probably the most valuable spiritual blessings are intended. The form was especially adapted to awaken the interest and cultivate the loyalty of the exiles.

The Highway.

Clearly the climax of this prediction is the description of the Highway of Holiness. It will be consecrated ground. An unclean person shall not pass over it; and the worthless wayfarer, whom we call a loafer or tramp, and the fool, who is always in the Bible regarded as a nuisance or a miscreant, shall not loiter there. It is also a safe way; for no lion or other dangerous beast shall infest it. But the redeemed, those whom Jehovah has ransomed from Babylonian possession, from the midst of "sorrow and sighing," shall come by that way with everlasting joy upon their heads.

**Messianic
Reach.**

We may not suppose that because this was addressed to the exiles that its value does not extend beyond their experience. Some of the principles here exhibited are timeless. (1) Jehovah is the

guardian and protector of His people; for if He led Israel to some far-off sacred task, He will lead all His faithful ones to a worthy service and a rich reward. (2) He who offered to transform the desert into a paradise and change the deceptive mirage into pools of water before Israel if she would leave Babylon, is able and ready to give even a more marvelous national prosperity to those that heed His call out of moral bondage and spiritual exile; and this is often demonstrated in the progress of an honest, industrious and enterprising people. (3) It is true, not only that the Messiah is able to heal the blind and halt, but that his principles of mercy and thoughtfulness for the suffering have led to sanitary regulations, surgical and medical skill, and to such care of the afflicted as that their deprivations all but disappear. (4) Jehovah has pointed out to Israel a Way of Holiness, not merely a path through the Arabian desert, but a moral and religious course from the days of the Exile onward, and especially the great Christian highroad of a holy life by which the ransomed of Jehovah "come with singing unto Zion." Thus the prophecy is an ideal representation of the good will of Jehovah to men and his disposition to lead on toward an increasingly glorious future.

Section V. Prophecies of Restoration.

Their Character.

Among the undated prophecies are many utterances that contemplate a restoration from exile, and may be presumed to relate to the house of Israel about to go forth from Babylonia. Especially in the book of Isaiah, chapters xl-lxvi, are many passages, besides those already considered under other heads, that express the Messianic relation of Israel to Jehovah in her restoration to the land of divine choice. If no great Messianic future had been in store for Israel, the words of the prophet in these passages could be regarded only as the exaggerations of a religious fanatic. In the light of Messianic developments, however, these representations are sane, since no flight of prophetic enthusiasm can transcend the manifest realities of Jehovah's redemptive work.

1. *A Proclamation of Comfort. Isa. xl. 1-11.***Literary
Form.**

The form of this prophecy is unique. It opens abruptly with a call from Jehovah to comfort His people and to announce the end of their warfare. This is followed by a series of voices proclaiming a preparation for the return from captivity, the certainty of Jehovah's word, and the nearness of His reward. It is a dramatic forecast of Israel's release under Jehovah's direction. The literary character of the writing may be seen when reproduced in modern form.

(Jehovah's call to His proclaimers.)

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God,
 Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem;
 And cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished,
 That her iniquity is pardoned,
 That she hath received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins.

(The voice of a proclaimer.)

Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of Jehovah;
 Make level in the desert a highway for our God.
 Every valley shall be exalted,
 And every mountain and hill shall be made low;
 And the uneven shall be made level,
 And the rough places a plain;
 And the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed,
 And all flesh shall see it together;
 For the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.

(A second voice.)

Cry.

(A third voice.)

What shall I cry?
 All flesh is grass,
 And all its goodness is as the flower of the field;
 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth,
 Because the breath of Jehovah bloweth upon it;
 Surely the people is grass.

(The second voice.)

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth;
 But the word of our God shall stand forever.

(One proclaimer calling to another.)

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion,
 Get thee up on a high mountain;

O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem,
 Lift up thy voice with strength;
 Lift it up, be not afraid;
 Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!
 Behold, the Lord Jehovah will come as a mighty one,
 And his arm will rule for him;
 Behold, his reward is with him,
 And his recompense before him.
 He will feed his flocks like a shepherd.
 He will gather the lambs in his arm,
 And carry them in his bosom,
 And will gently lead those that have their young.

**Need of
Comfort.**

The teaching of the prophets both before and after the Exile was that the fall of Jerusalem and the scattering of its inhabitants were punishments for sin and inflicted by Jehovah. These penalties proved very severe, and lasted many years. At their close Jehovah approached Israel as a parent to a chastened child with appropriate consolations and promises. Israel's deep sadness made such a show of kindness necessary, and her exiled condition made the promises of restoration the best possible means of solace. Indeed, nothing could so readily and permanently satisfy her longings as a final return and resettlement of the land of her fathers.

**The Greatest
Consolation.**

But Jehovah's consolations go much deeper than a prospect of return to Palestine. Jehovah is Himself much more to Israel than homes and lands and cities; and hence the deepest voice of consolation is that which cries, "Behold your God." Jehovah will come to Judah, not merely as a visitor to receive the homage which has been long His due, but as a ruler and a rewarder; and thus by His coming the nation will secure the divine guidance and blessing the spurning of which has brought on all her woes. If in punishment Jehovah has seemed harsh toward Judah, now in the restoration He will show the gentleness and mercy of a shepherd that gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them in his bosom. The Messianic element here is the blessed future implied for the chosen people, in which they are to be divinely directed and divinely rewarded.

2. *Deliverance by Cyrus.*

Historical

A series of prophecies relating to the work

Background.

of Cyrus and the return of Israel to Palestine

may be studied together. A brief survey of the political situation will make the bearing of the messages more apparent. We are informed by a tablet containing the annals of Nabonidus, the last king of the Babylonian Empire, that in 549 B. C. Astyages, king of Media, made war with Cyrus, king of Ansan, that the army of Astyages revolted against him and delivered him to Cyrus, who then took the capital of Media, Ecbatana. About three years later according to these annals, Cyrus is called "king of Persia," which may imply that during this interval he had gained dominion over that country. He rapidly conquered northern Mesopotamia and Armenia, and in 540 by a brilliant campaign in Asia Minor captured the person and wealth of Croesus, king of Lydia. Taking advantage of a revolt in northern Babylonia, he marched against Nabonidus in 538, won a victory at Opis, took Sippara without fighting, and the army under Gobryas followed the fleeing Nabonidus to Babylon, where the city and king were taken without resistance.

Setting of the Prophecy. Whatever may be said of the date of this portion of Isaiah, the prophecy concerning Cyrus and the exiles relates to the time of the campaigns just mentioned, and looks forward to the consequent fortunes of Israel. These utterances particularly fit that moment in the history when Cyrus had won his great successes in Lydia, and might be presumed Babylon's superior rival. It is to be noted that the prophecy does not predict the rising of Cyrus as if he belonged to the future, but assumes his existence and ability to conquer, as if he were well known. He is one already "raised up," to whom Jehovah "giveth nations," and whom He addresses as a present personage. The prediction relates to what Cyrus is to do for Babylon and Israel; and this implies that before the prophet assumes as the setting of his messages the time just before the fall of the Babylonian Empire.

The First Passage. The prophet alludes to Cyrus in three distinct passages, and in the second of these he is twice called by name; but in the others he is marked only by the work which he is to do. In no case is he formally introduced

as if unknown; but in every instance allusion is made to him incidentally in the course of a discussion to which the mention of Cyrus is quite subordinate. In the first passage, Isa. xli. 1-4, 25, the subject of divine sovereignty is treated, and the question is asked, "Who hath raised up one from the east?" and the answer is, "I, Jehovah, the first, and with the last, I am he." The passage is argumentative in thought, but dramatic and poetic in form. The nations are summoned into Jehovah's presence, and He reasons with them as follows:

Keep silence before me, O islands;
And let the peoples renew their strength:
Let them come near; then let them speak;
Let us come near together to judgment.

Who hath raised up one from the east,
Him whom victory meets at every step?

He giveth nations before him,
And maketh him rule over kings;
He giveth them as dust to his sword,
As the driven stubble to his bow.
He pursueth them, and passeth on safely,
Even by a way that he had not gone with his feet.

Who hath wrought and done it,
Calling the generations from the beginning?
I, Jehovah, the first, and with the last, I am he.

* * * * *

I have raised up one from the north, and he is come;
From the rising of the sun one that calleth upon my name:
And he shall come upon rulers as upon mortar,
And as the potter treadeth clay.

**Chief
Value.**

This part of the prophecy has no strictly Messianic feature; but Jehovah's sovereignty is essential to the importance of Israel's election to be His Servant, which is announced in the context, vv. 8-16. The rising of Cyrus is explained to be the work of Jehovah, and his success is a part of the divine purpose; but to what end this revolution is produced among the nations, the prophecy does not here point out. In the fall of the nations by which Israel has been oppressed, wrought by the hand of Israel's God, the exiles can discern at least a dawn of deliverance. This will

be more fully developed in later allusions to the conqueror.

**The Second
Passage.**

In the second passage, Isa. xlv. 24—xlv. 25, Cyrus is set forth as a distinct figure, his mission plainly announced, and the beneficent results for Israel are specified. Pursuant to the dramatic style of the prophet, he first addresses Israel with the words of promise regarding the career of Cyrus, then He addresses Cyrus concerning the divine source of his strength, then again He addresses Israel as if some had dissented to the choice of a foreign prince for a deliverer, and finally He turns to the idolatrous nations with a most profound and rebuking contrast of His far-reaching purposes of salvation with the senselessness of their wooden images. The most important portions of the passage are as follows:

(Addressed to Israel.)

Thus saith Jehovah, thy Redeemer,
And he that formed thee from the womb:
I am Jehovah, that maketh all things;
That stretcheth forth the heavens alone;
That spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;
That frustrateth the signs of the liars,
And maketh diviners mad;
That turneth wise men backward.
And maketh their knowledge foolish;
That confirmeth the word of his servant,
And performeth the counsel of his messengers;
That saith of Jerusalem, She shall be inhabited,
And of the cities of Judah, They shall be built,
And I will raise up the waste places thereof;
That saith of the deep, Be dry,
And I will dry up the rivers;
That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd,
And shall perform all my pleasure,
Even saying of Jerusalem, She shall be built;
And of the temple, Thy foundations shall be laid.

(Addressed to Cyrus.)

Thus saith Jehovah to his anointed, to Cyrus.
Whose right hand I have holden,
To subdue nations before him,
And I will loose the loins of kings;
To open the doors before him,
And the gates shall not be shut:
I will go before thee,
And make the rough places smooth;
I will break in pieces the doors of brass,

And cut in sunder the bars of iron;
 And I will give thee the treasures of darkness,
 And hidden riches of secret places,
 That thou mayest know that it is I, Jehovah,
 Who call thee by thy name, even the God of Israel.
 For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel my chosen,
 I have called thee by thy name;
 I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.
 I am Jehovah, and there is none else;
 Besides me there is no God.
 I will gird thee, though thou has not known me,
 That they may know from the rising of the sun,
 And from the west, that there is none beside me:
 I am Jehovah, and there is none else.
 I form the light, and create darkness;
 I make peace, and create evil;
 I am Jehovah, that doeth all these things.

(Addressed to dissenting Israel.)

Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!
 A potsherd among the potsherds of the earth!
 Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it,
 What makest thou? or thy work say, He hath no hands?
 Woe unto him that saith to a father, What begettest thou?
 Or to a woman, With what travailest thou?
 Thus saith Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker:
 Ask me of the things that are to come;
 Concerning my sons and the work of my hands, demand of me.
 I have made the earth, and created man upon it;
 I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens,
 And all their host have I commanded.
 I have raised him up in righteousness,
 And I will make straight all his ways:
 He shall build my city, and set my exiles free,
 Not for price nor reward, saith Jehovah of hosts.

(Addressed to idolatrous nations.)

Assemble yourselves and come;
 Draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations:
 They have no knowledge that carry the wood of their idol,
 And pray unto a god that cannot save.
 Declare ye, and bring it forth;
 Yea, let them take counsel together:
 Who hath showed this from ancient time?
 Who declared it of old? Did not I, Jehovah?
 And there is no God else besides me,
 A just God and a Savior; there is none besides me.
 Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth;
 For I am God, and there is none else.
 By myself have I sworn,

The word is gone from my mouth in righteousness,
 And shall not return,
 That unto me every knee shall bow,
 Every tongue shall swear.
 Only in Jehovah, it is said of me, are righteousness and strength;
 Even to him shall men come;
 And all they that were incensed against him shall be ashamed.
 In Jehovah shall all the seed of Israel be justified and glory.

**The Main
 Point of
 Emphasis.**

That which Israel most needed in this greatest crisis of all her history was to know the absolute, exclusive and divine sovereignty of Jehovah; and this truth more than any other finds emphasis in this prophecy. Cyrus is not mentioned on his own account, nor raised up for his own sake, nor have his own divinities prospered him; but it is all of Jehovah and for the glory of His name. Cyrus is unwittingly the servant of the one true God, is doing His pleasure, and is yet to accomplish greater deeds by His help—all that men may know that it is Jehovah, and that there is none else. Not till Israel has learned this cardinal truth will she be prepared to take any steps toward her Messianic future.

**The Work
 of Cyrus
 for Israel.**

Israel is informed that the career of Cyrus is not an accident of history, but he is Jehovah's shepherd placed over Israel's interests. His office is to say of Jerusalem, "She shall be built;" and of the temple, "Thy foundations shall be laid." Besides this, he is to set the captives free, and that without price or reward.

**Motive of
 Cyrus.**

The policy of the Assyrians and Babylonians had been to deport nations from their native lands, that they might not become rebellious; but this had left many countries desolate, and the empire had gained but little strength. Cyrus would adopt the opposite policy; and by returning peoples interested in their homelands, he sought to give growth and vigor to his dominion. Josephus (Ant. xi. i. 2) says that Cyrus was moved to return Israel and to rebuild Jerusalem by this prophecy; but it is very uncertain whether this is true, or whether Cyrus ever heard of this prophecy. The writer of 2 Chronicles 36:22, and Ezra 1:1, ascribes the incitement of Cyrus to a prophecy of Jeremiah (perhaps

he refers to Jer. 29:10) ; but that prophet does not mention Cyrus by name nor foretell the decree of any king in connection with the return.

**Salvation of
the World.**

The ultimate object of Jehovah is stated indirectly, but not the less distinctly when He says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, ye ends of the earth * * * By myself have I sworn * * * that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." Other gods are arraigned with the charge that they "cannot save," while in contrast Jehovah is "a just God and a Savior." It may be urged that only Israel's salvation is contemplated, and that this is implied by the closing line, "In Jehovah shall all the seed of Israel be justified and glory;" but the fact that when He addresses the "ends of the earth," He adds, "For I am God, and there is none else," indicates that He is the one God of all, hence that all men are accounted His and within the reach of His saving power, and this is confirmed by the words, "Even to him shall men come." Israel is first to be saved, then through Israel the ends of the earth are to be redeemed. Cyrus under Jehovah's guidance will begin the whole series of remedial efforts.

**The Third
Passage.**

Another allusion to the work of Cyrus appears in Isa. xlviii. 14-22, in connection with which Israel is admonished to leave Babylon, rejoicing that she is saved by Jehovah. As in former cases, the allusion lies in the midst of an exhortation to faith in the one God who is able to deliver His people. It is sufficient to quote vv. 14, 15 and 20, as follows:

Assemble yourselves, all ye, and hear;
Who among them hath declared these things?
He whom Jehovah loveth shall perform his pleasure on Babylon,
And his arm shall be on the Chaldeans.
I, even I, have spoken;
Yea, I have called him, I have brought him,
And he shall make his way prosperous.

* * * * *

Go ye forth from Babylon,
Flee ye from the Chaldeans;
With a voice of singing declare ye,
Tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth;
Say ye, Jehovah hath redeemed his servant Jacob.

**A Pledge
from Jehovah.**

From all these passages it is evident that the deliverance of Israel by the hand of Cyrus was to be a type of future salvation and a pledge from Jehovah that He would rescue His people even to the ends of the earth. When Israel goes forth from Babylon, she is to tell everywhere that it is Jehovah that has wrought the redemption. The reason for this is not given, but it points toward some future work of Jehovah which it is not the province of the prophet here more fully to unfold.

3. The Faithfulness of Jehovah.

**Position in
the Book
of Isaiah.**

The latter portion of the book of Isaiah, chapters xl—lxvi, may be conveniently divided into three nearly equal parts, chapters xl—xlviii, xlix—lv, lvi—lxvi. In the first of these divisions the work of Cyrus is perhaps a conspicuous, though subordinate, theme, and the Servant of Jehovah is introduced; in the second, the Servant is most notable; while in the third, the fortunes of Zion are in the foreground. Cyrus is not mentioned outside of the first division, and the Servant is set forth only in the first and second. The first treats primarily the sovereignty of Jehovah, which receives little attention in other parts; and so in the second the faithfulness of Jehovah has attention as in no other portion. This faithfulness is exhibited in several passages and in a variety of forms.

**(1) Zion not
Forsaken.**

In the first passage, Isa. xlix. 14-23, Zion is represented as uttering the complaint, "Jehovah hath forsaken me," and this is followed by Jehovah's response.

But Zion said, Jehovah hath forsaken me,
And the Lord hath forgotten me.

Can a woman forget her sucking child,
That she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?
Yea, these may forget, yet will not I forget thee.
Behold, I have graven thee on the palms of my hands;
Thy walls are continually before me.
Thy children shall hasten hither;
Thy destroyers and thy devastators shall go forth from thee.

Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold:
 All these gather themselves together, and come to thee.
 As I live, saith Jehovah,
 With them all as an ornament thou shalt clothe thee,
 And gird thyself with them, like a bride.

For as for thy waste and desolate places,
 And thy land that hath been destroyed,
 Surely now shalt thou be too strait for the inhabitants,
 And they that swallowed thee up shall be far away.
 The children of thy bereavement shall yet say in thine ears,
 The place is too strait for me,
 Give place to me that I may dwell.
 Then shalt thou say in thine heart,
 Who hath begotten me these,
 Seeing I have been bereaved of my children, and am solitary,
 An exile, and wandering to and fro?
 And who hath brought up these?
 Behold, I was left alone; these, where were they?

Thus saith the Lord Jehovah,
 Behold, I will lift up my hand to the nations,
 And set up my ensign to the peoples;
 And they shall bring thy sons in their bosom,
 And thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.
 And kings shall be thy nursing fathers,
 And their queens thy nursing mothers:
 They shall bow down to thee with their faces to the earth,
 And lick the dust of thy feet;
 And thou shalt know that I am Jehovah;
 And they that wait for me shall not be put to shame.

**Fitness
to Exiles.**

The appropriateness of this message to the conditions of Israel near the close of the Exile is notable. For many years there had been no relief from the thralldom of the Captivity, and it was natural that Israel should answer the prophets with the despairing cry, Jehovah has forsaken us. If Jehovah is to accomplish anything with this people, such a complaint must be fully met, and mutual confidence be restored. This necessity calls forth a very tender avowal of Jehovah's love for Israel and a renewed expression of His gracious purposes of restoration and prosperity.

**Force of
the Plea.**

Very beautiful and impressive figures are employed to exhibit Jehovah's faithfulness in this prophecy. The strongest instinct of human love is that of a woman for her infant child, and Jehovah protests

that though a mother might forget her babe, He will not forget His chosen people. Jehovah has inscribed them indelibly, like tattooed tokens of remembrance, on the palms of His hand, that they might be as parts of Himself, and brought to His mind by every motion of His own life. He will make Zion as a prolific mother, around whom numerous children shall gather, with which she shall be decked as with ornaments and girdled as a bride encircles her wedding dress with a glittering girdle. She need not lament that she has not children to repeople the desolated homeland; for, although she may count herself as a widow bereft, her children shall be so many that the land will prove too narrow to hold them, and she shall overhear them saying to one another, "Give me more room in which to dwell." Remembering that she was husbandless and an exile, she shall wonder how so many children have suddenly appeared, who their father, by whom brought up, and where they have been. When all this comes to pass, Israel can no more charge desertion against Jehovah.

**Added
Honor.**

Moreover, honor shall be added to numbers. Jehovah will beckon with His hand to the nations, and they shall come carrying Israel's children from every quarter, and He will set up an ensign where the precious burdens shall be unloaded. Besides this, the kings and queens of the earth will become the nurses of Israel's offspring; and after the manner of the greatest Oriental homage, these kings and queens shall bow down and lick the very dust of Israel's feet. Thus graphically and poetically the ascendancy of Israel among the peoples of the earth is foretold; and while this has not been realized politically, yet religiously under the Messiah all races of men are paying homage to the favored sons of Jacob.

**(2) Israel not
Divorced.**

The second passage, Isa. 1.1-3, meets Israel's doubt of Jehovah's interest in her from a slightly different angle. More distinctly than in the former passage, Jehovah is the husband of Israel; for while she is there represented as misconceiving herself a widow "bereaved of children and solitary," she is here corrected of the mistaken notion that she has been divorced by Jehovah.

So long had she been deprived of His help and left to struggle with her misfortunes alone, that she concludes that the separation is final, and hence that it is not worth while to look to Him for sympathy or deliverance; but it is clear that such a thought encouraged in her mind would defeat all His plans to make her His agent in the world's redemption. In a very forceful way, therefore, He seeks to remove the error:

**Children
not Sold.**

The individual descendants of Israel are here poetically regarded as sons of Jehovah; and since they seem to be abandoned by Him, they think of themselves as sold by their father to creditors as slaves in payment of a debt. He protests that this is also a mistake, and assigns as the true reason of their bondage, that they had sold themselves by their sins. The blame of their misfortune rests upon themselves. He is ready to redeem, but from them He receives no response. This fine poetic representation of a sad condition is worded as follows:

Thus saith Jehovah:
Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement,
Wherewith I have put her away?
Or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you?
Behold, for your iniquities were ye sold,
And for your transgressions was your mother put away.

Wherefore, when I came, was there no man?
When I called, was there none to answer?
Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem?
Or have I no power to deliver?
Behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea,
I make the rivers a wilderness:
Their fish stink for lack of water, and die of thirst.
I clothe the heavens with blackness,
And I make sackcloth their covering.

**A Crisis
Implied.**

This message evidently implies a very weak confidence in Jehovah among the exiles. The fact that there was no one to answer when He called, indicates that the prophetic work was not taking a very deep hold on the popular thought. The prophet found it necessary to call for the proof that Jehovah had wholly abandoned His people and put them permanently out of His possession. He is forced to argue that Jehovah is able to redeem even out of the

hands of powerful oppressors; and to establish this he urges that Jehovah is equal to the task of drying up the sea or of clothing the heavens with blackness. If he cannot convince the Israelites that their God can redeem from the exile, the prophet can do nothing for his people, and their Messianic future is a hopeless blank.

**(3) Redemption
at Hand.**

A much longer plea for Jehovah's faithfulness to Israel than the preceding has been inserted between two passages concerning the Servant, and includes Isa. li. 1—lii. 12. It is really a series of appeals in which the ability, righteousness and purposes of Jehovah are enlisted in Israel's behalf. In the quotation below, li. 9-16 is omitted, partly because the original text is uncertain, and partly because the thought is nearly the same as that already noted in the previous passages. The message is addressed chiefly to those among the people that were most inclined to hearken to Jehovah's call to a righteous life. The literary form will be seen in the following arrangement:

Hear me, ye that follow after righteousness,
Ye that seek Jehovah:
Look at the rock whence ye were hewn,
And the hole of the pit whence ye were digged.
Look at Abraham your father,
And at Sarah who bare you;
For when he was but one I called him,
And I blessed him, and made him many.
For Jehovah hath comforted Zion;
He hath comforted all her waste places,
And made her wilderness like Eden,
And her desert like the garden of Jehovah;
Joy and gladness shall be found therein,
Thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

Attend unto me, O my people;
And give ear to me, O my nation:
For a law shall go forth from me,
And I will establish my justice for a light of the peoples.
My righteousness is near,
My salvation is gone forth,
And mine arms shall judge the peoples;
The Isles shall wait for me,
And on mine arm shall they trust.
Lift up your eyes to the heavens,
And look upon the earth beneath;

For the heavens shall vanish away like smoke,
 And the earth shall wax old like a garment;
 And they that dwell therein shall die in like manner:
 But my salvation shall be for ever,
 And my righteousness shall not be abolished.

Hear me, ye that know righteousness,
 The people in whose heart is my law;
 Fear ye not the reproach of men,
 Neither be ye dismayed at their revilings.
 For the moth shall eat them up like a garment,
 And the worm shall eat them like wool;
 But my righteousness shall be for ever,
 And my salvation unto all generations.

* * * * *

Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem,
 That hast drunk at the hands of Jehovah the cup of his wrath;
 Thou hast drunken, drained the bowl of the cup of staggering,
 There is none to guide her
 Among all the sons whom she hath brought forth;
 Neither is there any that taketh her by the hand
 Among all the sons that she hath brought up.
 These two things are befallen thee;
 Who shall bemoan thee?
 Desolation and destruction, and famine and the sword;
 How shall I comfort thee?
 Thy sons have fainted,
 They lie at the head of all the streets,
 As an antelope in a net;
 They are full of the wrath of Jehovah,
 The rebuke of thy God.

Therefore hear now this,
 Thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine:
 Thus saith thy Lord Jehovah,
 And thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people,
 Behold, I have taken out of thy hand the cup of staggering,
 Even the bowl of the cup of my wrath;
 Thou shalt no more drink it again:
 And I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee,
 That have said to thy soul,
 Bow down, that we may go over;
 And thou hast laid thy back as the ground,
 And as the street, to them that go over.

Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion;
 Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city;
 For henceforth there shall be no more come into thee
 The uncircumcised and the unclean.
 Shake thyself from the dust;

Arise, sit on thy throne, O Jerusalem:
Loose thyself from the bonds of thy neck,
O captive daughter of Zion.

For thus saith Jehovah,
Ye were sold for nought;
And ye shall be redeemed without money.
For thus saith the Lord Jehovah,
My people went down at the first into Egypt to sojourn there:
And the Assyrian hath oppressed them without cause.
Now, therefore, what do I here, saith Jehovah,
Seeing that my people is taken away for nought?
They that rule over them shout, saith Jehovah,
And my name continually all the day is blasphemed.
Therefore my people shall know my name,
Therefore in that day, that I am he who saith, Behold it is I.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him
That bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace,
That bringeth good tidings of good,
That publisheth salvation,
That saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!
Hark! Thy watchmen!
They lift up the voice; they sing together;
For they shall see eye to eye,
When Jehovah returneth to Zion.
Break forth into joy,
Sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem;
For Jehovah hath comforted his people,
He hath redeemed Jerusalem.
Jehovah hath bared his holy arm before all the nations;
And all the ends of the earth see the salvation of our God.

Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence,
Touch no unclean thing;
Go ye out of the midst of her;
Cleanse yourselves, ye that bear the vessels of Jehovah.
For ye shall not go out in haste,
Neither shall ye go out by flight;
For Jehovah will go before you,
And the God of Israel will be your rearward.

No doubt one of the objections offered by many Israelites to a return to Palestine was that they were too few to repopulate a large and desolate land: and the prophet answers this by pointing to the power of God to give them numbers as exemplified by the multiplication of Abraham's posterity. The emphasis is on Jehovah, "I called him, and I blessed him, and made him many," "Je-

Assurance
of Numbers.

hovah hath comforted Zion." It is He that has resolved to turn the wilderness into an Eden and the desert into a garden of His own for Israel's benefit. This will be done by increasing the people till they will restore the land to its former fruitfulness and glory, and fill it with "joy and gladness," with "thanksgiving and the voice of melody."

**Law and
Salvation.**

Among Israel's deepest sorrows in the Exile was the constant feeling that they were suffering cruelties without regard to justice and right. The law of righteousness formerly known by the Israelites was either unknown to their oppressors or wholly disregarded. It is most consoling to learn that Jehovah will send forth His law and establish justice among the Gentiles, and that even the Isles, the coastlands of the Mediterranean, will wait for Jehovah and trust in Him. His law is righteous, and His salvation means deliverance from tyranny. But some person may say that a period of such righteousness as that of Jehovah among the nations will be very brief; but the prophet answers, Look at the heavens and the earth, how enduring they are; and yet these shall vanish like smoke and all their inhabitants perish, but the salvation of Jehovah shall be forever and His righteousness never be abolished. It can be hardly doubted that here he has a view of the universal and imperishable kingdom of the Messiah.

**Promise
of Relief.**

The reproaches from Israel's captors and taskmasters have embittered their lives sadly and long; but Jehovah promises that their revilers shall perish as a woolen garment is eaten by the moth. Israel has drunken from the bowl of Jehovah's wrath on account of her sins; and when destruction came upon her, there were none of her sons able to deliver her, since they were all full of the divine wrath, and snared as antelopes in a net. Their humiliation has been most abject; for their captors have compelled them to lie face downward on the street, while they marched over them treading on their backs. But the time of this affliction is past; and now Jehovah is about to give the bowl of staggering into the hands of the enemy, and the day of Israel's escape is at hand.

**A Call to
Liberty.**

The enslavement of Jehovah's people has been comparable to that of a captive girl, clad in the meanest and scantiest raiment, and held by a chain fastened to an iron band about her neck; but now Zion is called to put on her beautiful garments, to shake off the dust of her toils and humiliation, and to loose the bonds of her neck. Jerusalem, here the personification of Israel, is invited to arise and be enthroned with royal ceremony. When Israel was enslaved, no price was paid; and so she shall be redeemed from bondage without an offer of money. The poverty of the people will therefore be no hindrance to their release. Indeed, freedom will not come about in the usual manner, but by the hand of Jehovah, and that for a very pressing reason; for He gave His people to their oppressors without price, and instead of being honored therefor, His name has been continually blasphemed. He must vindicate His honor among the nations, and this can be done most effectively by Israel's redemption.

**Good News
Welcomed.**

The prophet next leads the people in a strain of poetic joy in which an imaginary welcome is extended to the herald that brings to Zion the good news of her salvation. The watchmen of the city behold a messenger coming, and break forth into singing; for what they have longed to see, namely, Jehovah returning to Zion, they now see "eye to eye," that is, as close at hand as when one eye looks into another.* In this connection the prophet emphasizes the conspicuity of Jehovah's deed in redeeming Jerusalem. He "has bared his holy arm before all the nations, and all the ends of the earth see the salvation of our God." This is in harmony with the complete vindication of His honor in the preceding strophe. It does not signify the preaching of the Messianic gospel throughout the world, since the redemption is only that of Israel from captivity; but it does indicate Jehovah's interest in making Himself known among the nations. This presages

*The Hebrews did not use the words "eye to eye" in the sense of unity or harmony of opinion, as we often use them; but their use is illustrated in Num. 14:14, where Jehovah is said to be seen "eye to eye," or, as usually translated, "face to face."

either their fortune or fate, according as they array themselves for or against this universal Ruler.

**Departure
Urged.**

Turning again into an exhortation to the people, the prophet cries, "Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence." But while he urges them forth from Babylon, he would have them understand that it is to be no precipitous flight, as when Israel fled from Egypt, but rather a stately march under the sacred guidance and protection of Jehovah. They are to bear the temple vessels, and therefore must purify themselves from every pollution. When he says, "Touch no unclean thing," he probably means that they were not to supply themselves with the wealth of the heathen; and this is advised for the good reason that Jehovah will go with them. He is to go before them, as one that provides for their wants; and He will be their rearward as their constant safeguard. Such attention to Israel in the moment of her greatest weakness surely signifies that Jehovah has some great duty and honor in store for this people; and what these fortunes can be, only the sequel, the Messianic age, can declare.

**(4) Future
Prosperity.**

A fourth passage, Isa. liv, sets in still larger vista the prosperity of Israel under the care of Jehovah. It is spoken in tender tones, suited to convey the "everlasting lovingkindness" to the "afflicted, tempest-tossed and uncomforted" nation. It reads as follows:

Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear;
Break forth into singing, and cry aloud,
Thou that didst not travail with child:
For more are the children of the desolate
Than the children of the married wife, saith Jehovah.
Enlarge the place of thy tent,
And let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations;
Spare not; lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes.
For thou shalt spread abroad on the right and on the left;
And thy seed shall possess the nations,
And make the desolate cities to be inhabited.

Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed:
Neither be thou confounded;
For thou shalt not be put to shame:
For thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth;
And the reproach of thy widowhood
Thou shalt remember no more.
For thy Maker is thy husband;

Jehovah of hosts is his name:
 And the Holy One of Israel is thy Redeemer;
 The God of the whole earth shall he be called.
 For Jehovah called thee as a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit,
 And as a wife of youth, when she is cast off, saith thy God.
 For a small moment have I forsaken thee;
 But with great mercies will I gather thee.
 In overflowing wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment;
 But with everlasting favor I have mercy on thee,
 Saith Jehovah thy Redeemer.

For this is as the waters of Noah unto me;
 For as I swore that the waters of Noah
 Shall no more go over the earth,
 So have I sworn that I will not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.
 For the mountains may depart, and the hills be removed;
 But my mercy shall not depart from thee,
 Neither shall my covenant of peace be removed,
 Saith Jehovah that hath mercy on thee.

O thou afflicted, tempest-tossed and uncomforted,
 Behold, I will set thy stones in fair colors,
 And lay thy foundations with sapphires.
 And I will make thy pinnacles of rubies,
 And thy gates of carbuncles,
 And all thy border of precious stones.
 And all thy children shall be taught of Jehovah;
 And great shall be the peace of thy children.
 In righteousness shalt thou be established:
 Thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear;
 And from terror, for it shall not come near thee.
 Behold, they may conspire—it is not of me;
 Whoever shall conspire against thee shall fall because of thee.
 Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the fire of coals,
 And bringeth forth a weapon for his work;
 And I have created the waster to destroy.
 No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; [demn.
 And every tongue rising against thee in judgment thou shalt con-
 This is the heritage of the servants of Jehovah,
 And their righteousness which is of me, saith Jehovah.

**Growth in
Numbers.**

The condition of Israel in the Exile was most unfavorable to give encouragement respecting their growth in numbers. They were scattered through many provinces, had little dealing or communication with each other, and must have supposed that their population was being still wasted as at the beginning of their captivity. They probably did not know how rapidly they were multiplying,

and thought of the nation as a barren wife; but the prophet affirms that they were increasing more than when in their own land. As a family tent is enlarged to admit the increasing number of children, Israel must prepare for a great future. Her children shall spread abroad in every direction, not only to fill up the deserted cities of Palestine, but sufficiently to take possession of the nations. In only a small way was this literally fulfilled. If Israel had become faithful to Jehovah, and thus fulfilled the condition doubtless assumed for the promise, it might have come to pass; but what Christ has done in reaching the nations and bringing them under his control may be credited to the fulfilment of this prophecy, since in the thought of the prophets he does the work of his nation.

Consolation.

Again the figure of Israel as a deserted wife is used to convey Jehovah's consolations. "The shame of her youth" doubtless refers to her service to the Egyptians, while "the reproach of her widowhood" is clearly the Babylonian exile. Her Husband is Jehovah, who is also her Redeemer; and though she may have deemed herself forsaken and cast off, she is to be gathered with her children in the spirit of great mercy. It was a momentary wrath by which she was exiled, but with everlasting love she shall be brought back to the divine arms. Surely such assurances ought to heal her sorrows and quicken her faith.

Oath of Mercy.

At the close of the deluge in the days of Noah God took oath that such a flood should not be repeated; and so now He has sworn that He will not continue His anger to Israel. We have record of the former oath (Gen. 9:9-17) described in the form of a covenant; but of this latter oath we have no record but this prophetic statement. It is designed to be Jehovah's strongest pledge of mercy. Even the mountains and hills will sooner be removed than His lovingkindness. It is a covenant of peace, an irrevocable agreement in which the loyalty of the people shall meet the favor of God.

The Great Contrast.

The future is to bring a great contrast with the present. Zion is now "afflicted, tempest-tossed and uncomforted;" but she shall be adorned with glittering wealth as the gift of Jehovah's love. Her foundations, stones, pinnacles and gates shall be set with precious gems, while even the border of her land shall be marked with jewels. But what can such possessions avail if the Jews be surrounded with greedy enemies that will conspire to seize their property and reduce them again to servitude? To meet such a dread, the prophet promises that in their righteousness they shall be so firmly established that no conspiring foe shall be able to smite them with terror. Jehovah is competent to protect; for He has created the smith that forms the weapon and the waster that wields it, and therefore knows that no weapon formed against Zion will be effective. Not even a tongue lifted against her shall escape rebuke. Such is to be the heritage of a people that for many years had no estate.

Ideal Prophecy.

Such a prophecy is clearly ideal, a rich hyperbole to attract the hearts of despondent exiles. It reminds us of the closing section of the book of Ezekiel. It presents Jehovah's good will and good purposes toward Israel, but it is in poetic and materialistic forms, not intended to be literally fulfilled; but had Israel proved worthy, she would have received far greater blessings, not to say that this prefigured the infinitely greater riches that she has actually found in Christ.

4. Promises to the Righteous.**(1) Foreigners and Eunuchs.**

An address, including chapters lvi. and lvii. of Isaiah, begins and closes with promises to the upright, while the portion between these parts consists of a protest against the greed and cruelties of wicked men. The promises have a Messianic element that deserves attention. The opening paragraphs offer divine welcome and blessing to foreigners that join themselves to Jehovah and to eunuchs that keep His word. The message begins with general

exhortations to righteousness, and this is followed by a special word to each of these two classes.

Thus saith Jehovah:
 Keep ye justice, and do righteousness;
 For my salvation is near to come,
 And my righteousness to be revealed.
 Blessed is the man that doeth this,
 And the son of man that holdeth it fast;
 That keepeth the sabbath from profaning it,
 And keepeth his hand from doing any evil.

Neither let the foreigner,
 That hath joined himself to Jehovah, speak, saying,
 Jehovah will surely separate me from his people;
 Neither let the eunuch say,
 Behold, I am a dry tree.
 For thus saith Jehovah of the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths,
 And choose the things that please me,
 And hold fast my covenant:
 Unto them will I give
 In my house and within my walls
 A memorial and a name
 Better than of sons and of daughters;
 I will give them an everlasting name,
 That shall not be cut off.

Also the foreigners that join themselves to Jehovah,
 To serve him and love the name of Jehovah, to be his servants,
 Every one that keepeth the sabbath from profaning it,
 And holdeth fast my covenant;
 Even them will I bring to my holy mountain,
 And make them joyful in my house of prayer:
 Their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices
 Shall be accepted upon mine altar;
 For my house shall be called
 A house of prayer for all peoples.
 The Lord Jehovah,
 Who gathereth the outcasts of Israel, saith,
 Yet will I gather others to him,
 Besides his own that are gathered.

**Messianic
 Value.**

These words contain the following suggestions of Messianic character: (1) An upright life is urged on the ground that Jehovah's salvation from the Exile is near, and especially that His righteousness is about to be revealed; and this can hardly mean simply the personal righteousness of God in His dealing with Israel, though He is always the example of righteous character, but rather the right-

eousness which He will require in connection with the return to the land of Palestine. Such a righteousness is a part of the Messianic aim. (2) Personal worth after the return shall no longer be estimated by the number of descendants, but by virtues and deeds which shall bring even to those who are not heads of families a kind of memorials that are more enduring than posterity. It is the work of the Messianic age to develop the importance of the individual life. (3) The reception and welcome given to foreigners are based on the divine intention to make the altar of Jehovah a worshipping-place for all men, and this can mean nothing less than an offer to the Gentiles to share in the religious privileges of the Hebrews. It is notable that throughout this prophecy emphasis is laid on the keeping of Jehovah's covenant by the individual, which corresponds to the new covenant foretold by Jeremiah (33:34, 35), which is not national, but individual.

(2) Comfort for
Contrite
Israelites.

The latter portion of this address, Isa. lvii.14-21, offers comforts to those among the people of Jehovah that turn toward Him with humble and contrite heart. Jehovah would have every stumbling-block removed from their way, and especially have them know that His wrath will not continue forever. It is therefore a word of hope to meet the discouragements which the new duty of returning to Palestine forces them to consider.

And he will say,
Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way,
Take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people.
For thus saith the high and lofty One
That inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy:
I dwell in the high and holy place,
With him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit,
To revive the spirit of the humble,
And to revive the heart of the contrite.

For I will not contend for ever,
Neither will I be always wroth;
For the spirit would faint before me,
And the souls that I have made.
For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth,
And I smote him; I hid my face and was wroth;
And he went on backsliding in the way of his heart.
I have seen his ways, and will heal him;
I will lead him also,

And restore comforts unto him and to his mourners.

I create the fruit of the lips:
 Peace, peace, to him that is far off
 And to him that is near, saith Jehovah;
 And I will heal him.
 But the wicked are like the troubled sea;
 For it cannot rest, and its waters cast up mire and dirt.
 There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

Israel's Stumbling-block.

It is here promised that Jehovah will order the casting up of a highway, which, as the parallelism shows, means the removal of the stumbling-block from the way of His people. The following context reveals this stumbling-block to be the wrath of God that brought on the Exile, and which during the Exile has seemed unabated. It must have been a great discouragement to the exiles when asked to obey His command; for who would wish to enrol in the service of an angry God? Such wrath would stand as an insuperable obstacle across the path of the Israelites when invited to return to their former land. Hence the figure of preparing a way clear before them. Jehovah asserts that His wrath had good grounds when it arose; but now its occasion has past, and it will subside.

Jehovah's Condescension.

Jehovah first announces His exaltation. He is "the high and lofty One," dwelling in the "high and holy place;" and yet He abides with him "that is of a contrite and humble spirit." This need not mean the spirit of a great sinner who is now overcome with sorrow; but on the contrary, it may be a very upright man, but who is not obstinate and self-willed against the commands of God. Affliction should bring the worthy spirit into such a humility as would rejoice to sink all else in a flood of delight to do the divine will. Jehovah perceives the necessity of pouring hope and comfort into such souls, lest if they faint, there be no others suited to carry forward the divine purposes to their consummation. This is the force of the present prophecy, and its bearing on the exilic conditions and also on the Messianic plan is apparent.

The Contrast.

A distinct contrast is drawn between the upright and the wicked. To the one come the calls of peace, peace! For the other, there is no peace. The upright whether far off or near, may come and find healing and rest; but

the wicked, like the restless sea, must suffer a perpetual turmoil. The baseness of the wicked in the Exile is described in the portion of the address preceding these verses; and it is certainly a revolting picture. They are fully warned by the prophet, but only scoff at his words. They "make a wide mouth, and put out the tongue" in proud derision of Jehovah's message. On this account the contrite and humble are chosen and promised rest and peace after all their exilic struggles. The worthy are made to understand that Jehovah will condescend to the humble, and deal graciously with them, and will reserve His wrath only for those whose obstinacy thwarts His sacred love. While this character of Jehovah may have been often exhibited in earlier periods of Israel's history; yet perhaps it was new to the exiles, and foretold to them a glorious future.

5. *The Future Glory of Zion. Isa. lx.*

The
Poem.

The blessing of Jehovah upon Zion is presented in ten strophes composing a poem of rare beauty. After the introductory strophe announcing that the light of Jehovah has risen upon the favored city, her children are described as returning from the lands of their exile, laden with the wealth of the nations and helped on their way by their former oppressors whose very kings henceforth become their servants. The last three strophes disclose Jehovah's blessing in the form of peace and light in recognition of their faithful and righteous character. The following arrangement will reveal the literary composition:

Arise, shine; for thy light is come,
And the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee.
For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth,
And gross darkness the peoples;
But Jehovah will arise upon thee,
And his glory shall be seen upon thee.
And nations shall come to thy light,
And kings to the brightness of thy rising.

Lift up thine eyes round about, and see;
They all assemble together, they come to thee;
Thy sons shall come from far,
And thy daughters shall be carried in the arms.
Then shalt thou see and be radiant,
And thy heart shall thrill and be enlarged;

Because the abundance of the sea shall be turned unto thee,
The wealth of the nations shall come unto thee.

The multitude of camels shall cover thee,
The dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;
All they from Sheba shall come,
They shall bring gold and frankincense,
And shall proclaim the praises of Jehovah.
All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered unto thee;
The rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee;
They shall come up to acceptance on mine altar;
And I will glorify the house of my glory.

Who are these that fly as a cloud,
And as the doves to their windows?
Surely the Isles shall wait for me,
And the ships of Tarshish first,
To bring thy sons from far,
Their silver and their gold with them,
For the name of Jehovah thy God,
And for the Holy One of Israel,
Because he hath glorified thee.

And foreigners shall build up thy walls,
And their kings shall minister unto thee:
For in my wrath I smote thee,
But in my favor have I had mercy on thee.
Thy gates also shall be open continually;
They shall not be shut day nor night;
That men may bring unto thee the wealth of the nations,
And their kings led captive.
For the nation and the kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish;
Yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.

The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee,
The fir-tree, the pine and the box-tree together,
To beautify the place of my sanctuary;
And I will make the place of my feet glorious.
And the sons of thy tormentors shall come bending to thee,
And all thy despisers shall bow down at the soles of thy feet,
And they shall call thee, The City of Jehovah,
The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated,
So that no man passed through thee,
I will make thee an eternal excellency,
A joy of many generations.
Thou shalt also suck the milk of the nations,
And shalt suck the breasts of kings;
And thou shalt know that I, Jehovah, am thy Savior,
And Thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

For brass I will bring gold,
 And for iron I will bring silver,
 And for wood brass, and for stones iron;
 I will also make thy officers peace,
 And thine exactors righteousness.
 Violence shall no more be heard in thy land,
 Desolation nor destruction within thy borders;
 But thou shalt call thy walls Salvation,
 And thy gates Praise.

The sun shall be no more thy light by day;
 Neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee:
 But Jehovah will be unto thee an everlasting light,
 And thy God thy glory.
 Thy sun shall no more go down,
 Neither shall thy moon withdraw itself;
 For Jehovah will be thine everlasting light,
 And the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

Thy people also shall be all righteous;
 They shall inherit the land for ever,
 The branch of my planting, the work of my hands,
 That I may be glorified.
 The little one shall become a thousand,
 And the small one a strong nation;
 I, Jehovah, will hasten it in its time.

**A Notable
Distinction.**

The emphatic thought throughout this poem is that Zion is exalted over all the other nations of the earth, and that this is brought about by the especial favor and help of Jehovah. This cannot signify that Jehovah was held by the prophet to be a national God, limited to a particular land or people; for this prophecy implies that Jehovah will have such a control among the nations that He will cause them to contribute to Israel's prosperity. He is a universal God, but showing special favor. Whether this special favor is an instance of partiality or not, depends upon whether or not the special favor is for universal good. If this utterance be compared with those concerning Jehovah's Servant, it must be clear that Zion was expected to bring light and redemption to the whole world. Only such an end could justify the distinction to which Zion is to be advanced.

**Optimistic
Prophecy.**

Nowhere in the Old Testament may be found a finer example of prophetic optimism than in this poem, and in no other place is its nature

more apparent. The prophet assumes that his people are in that worst of national conditons, scattered among the nations as exiles; and yet he speaks nothing but cheer. He seems to see no discouragement in the tyranny with which they are oppressed, the poverty in which they are entangled, or the desolation of their homeland which they must overcome. He appears oblivious of the fact that his people have gone only from bad to worse for generations, and expects them suddenly to rise to the highest excellence. If he remembers that in Jehovah's wrath they were smitten, he anticipates that in His favor they will outstrip all their losses. Their misfortunes shall all be transformed into blessings, their despair into hope, and their fears into exultations of joy. A more remarkable optimism than this has rarely commanded the respect of thoughtful men.

Can some adequate explanation of this spirit
Explanation. be proposed? Certainly not on natural grounds. There was nothing in the signs of the times that promised such a change, either in the Israelites themselves or in the nations by whom they were held in bondage. No political event could work such a change, involving as it does a complete moral reformation. No system of education could bring it about, no ministry of preachers or prophets, no codes of legal compulsion. There was only one power in the universe upon which the optimist could depend for a fruition of his hopes, and that was Jehovah; and here he rested all his confidence. It was to be Jehovah that should dispose the nations to return the exiles, to laden them with wealth, and to bow submissively at their feet; and He above all others was to remove violence, install peace, and fill the renewed Zion with incomparable glory. Why Jehovah should do all this, is not here indicated, but must be learned from other prophetic messages.

6. *Remarriage of Zion to Jehovah. Isa. lxii.*

The Prophecy. This chapter, which has been often thought to be connected with that which immediately precedes, has its prophetic affinities rather with chapter lx. which we have just studied. In three strophes the solicitude and purpose of Jehovah regarding Zion are portrayed. While the speaker might be regarded as Jehovah, it is

more probable that it is the prophet voicing the sentiment of God in a vivid form to make the deeper impression. Like Isa. 49:14, 15 and 50:1, it is intended to reassure Israel of Jehovah's interest in her and His intention to endow her with His choicest blessings. The following form seems most agreeable to the nature of the piece:

For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace,
 And for Jerusalem's sake will I not rest,
 Until her righteousness go forth as brightness,
 And her salvation as a lamp that burneth.
 And the nations shall see thy righteousness,
 And all kings thy glory;
 And thou shalt be called by a new name,
 Which the mouth of Jehovah shall name.
 Thou shalt also be a crown of beauty in the hand of Jehovah,
 And a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.
 Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken;
 Neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate:
 But thou shalt be called My delight is in her,
 And thy land Married.
 For Jehovah delighteth in thee,
 And thy land shall be married.
 For as a young man marrieth a virgin,
 So shall thy Builder* marry thee;
 And as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride,
 So shall thy God rejoice over thee.

I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem;
 They shall never hold their peace day nor night:
 Ye that are Jehovah's remembrancers, take no rest,
 And give him no rest, till he establish,
 And till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.
 Jehovah hath sworn by his right hand,
 And by the arm of his strength, (saying)
 Surely I will no more give thy grain as food for thine enemies;
 And foreigners shall not drink thy new wine,

*The English versions follow the present Hebrew text, and translate, "So shall thy sons marry thee;" which affords the ridiculous figure of sons marrying their mother. Bishop Lowth followed by Cheyne and others adopt a Hebrew text that differs only by vowel points from the text handed down to us by the Massorettes (5th to 10th cent., A. D.), which means "builder" instead of "sons." It makes good sense to say, "So shall thy Builder marry thee," and exactly suits the parallel line, "So shall thy God rejoice over thee." While we need not condemn the English translators, whose business is to express the meaning of the text before them, we may for such strong reasons as those just given adopt the amended text.

For which thou hast labored:

But they that have garnered it shall eat it, and praise Jehovah;
And they that have gathered it shall drink it in my holy courts.

Go through, go through the gates;

Prepare ye the way of the people;

Cast up, cast up the highway;

Gather out the stones;

Lift up an ensign for the peoples.

Behold, Jehovah hath proclaimed unto the end of the earth,

Say ye to the daughter of Zion,

Behold thy salvation cometh;

Behold, his reward is with him,

And his recompense before him.

And they shall call them The holy people, The redeemed of Jehovah;

And thou shalt be called Sought out, A city not forsaken.

**Force of the
Figure.**

The figure of marriage has greater force than the denial of divorcement in a former address (Isa. 50:1); since it is a positive avowal of Jehovah's love for Israel and His purpose to prosper and protect her. Hardly any other figure could have been chosen that would more strongly express the new tie with which Jehovah was willing to be bound to His people. It was therefore best suited to encourage the despairing exiles to trust in the divine help in a heroic effort to rebuild the waste cities and regarrison the long afflicted land of their fathers. The prophet must have discerned that a no less hearty affirmation of God's attachment to Zion would recommend the bold promises of wealth and glory which he was multiplying in these addresses. Otherwise few would believe that a God that had for two generations dealt only death and disaster would henceforth fulfil the most extravagant promises of blessing.

**Two Emphatic
Words.**

The two words that receive heaviest emphasis in this prophecy are the very ones that afford the surest clue to the purpose of Jehovah in this wonderful overture. They are "righteousness" and "salvation." It was Israel's sin that brought on her sorrows, and only by the path of righteousness can she ever return to Jehovah's favor. It is therefore an indispensable condition of her future excellence. But it is also necessary to her Messianic career, and is hence a vital Messianic element. Israel's salvation from Je-

Jehovah's wrath, which means her rescue from the engulfing captivity as well as a deliverance from sin, was no less important. The Messianic mission of the people could never be accomplished if they remained scattered and dependent upon heathen masters. This prophecy therefore makes more clear than many others how Jehovah would solve the serious problem of Israel's crisis.

7. *Jerusalem a Scene of Judgment. Isa. lxx., lxxi.*

The Passage. Following a lengthy prayer by the righteous Israelites to Jehovah for His mercies, recorded in chapters lxiii., lxiv., the present chapters contain what seems in some respects to be an answer to the prayer, and consists mainly of a mingled forecast of doom and blessing to be administered in and around the city of Jerusalem. Those who persist in idolatry with its immoralities are to be overthrown and their dead bodies to be cast out as an abomination to be consumed by the worm and fire; but to the righteous in Jerusalem Jehovah will "extend peace as a river and the glory of the nations as an overflowing stream." The following extracts contain the chief points of Messianic value:

For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth;
And the former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.
But be glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create;
For, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.
And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people;
And there shall be heard in her no more
The voice of weeping and the voice of crying.
There shall be no more thence an infant of days,
Nor an old man that hath not filled his days;
For the child shall die a hundred years old,
And the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.

And they shall build houses, and inhabit them;
And shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.
They shall not build, and another inhabit;
They shall not plant, and another eat;
For as the days of a tree shall be the days of my people,
And my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
They shall not labor in vain,
Nor bring forth for calamity;
For they are the seed of the blessed of Jehovah,
And their offspring with them.

And it shall come to pass that,
 Before they call I will answer;
 And while they are yet speaking, I will hear.
 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,
 And the lion shall eat straw like an ox;
 And dust shall be the serpent's food, [Jehovah.
 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith
 —Isa. 65:17-25.

Rejoice ye with Jerusalem,
 And be glad for her, all ye that love her:
 Rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn over her;
 That ye may suck and be satisfied
 With the breasts of her consolations;
 That ye may milk out and be delighted
 With the abundance of her glory.
 For thus saith Jehovah,
 Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river,
 And the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream:
 And ye shall suck thereof;
 Ye shall be borne upon the side,
 And shall be dandled upon the knees.
 As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you;
 And ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.
 And ye shall see it, and your heart shall rejoice,
 And your bones shall flourish as the tender grass:
 And the hand of Jehovah shall be known toward his servants;
 And he will have indignation against his enemies. —Isa. 66:10-14.

It is coming that I will gather all nations and tongues;
 And they shall come, and shall see my glory.
 And I will set a sign among them,
 And I will send such as escape of them unto the nations,
 To Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan,
 To the Isles afar off, that have not heard my fame,
 Neither have seen my glory;
 And they shall declare my glory among the nations.

And they shall bring all your brethren
 Out of all nations for an oblation unto Jehovah,
 Upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters,
 And upon mules and upon dromedaries,
 To my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith Jehovah,
 As the children of Israel bring their oblation
 In a clean vessel into the house of Jehovah.
 And of them also will I take for priests and Levites, saith Jehovah.

For as the new heavens and the new earth,
 Which I will make, shall remain before me, saith Jehovah,
 So shall your seed and your name remain.
 And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another,
 And from one sabbath to another,

Shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith Jehovah.
 And they shall go forth,
 And look upon the dead bodies of the men
 That have transgressed against me:
 For their worm shall not die,
 Neither shall their fire be quenched;
 And they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh. —Isa. 66:18-24.

**New Heavens
and New Earth.** Twice in this prophecy the author speaks of the "new heavens and the new earth" without definitely explaining what he means. The context in the first instance (65:14-22) shows that he cannot mean a literal recreation of heaven and earth, but a new condition of things as respects the chosen people, so that it will seem to be a new world to them. A literal recreation would not harmonize with the trend of thought hitherto developed: for everywhere he has spoken of the wonderful change which was to take place when Israel should return to Jerusalem. So now he contemplates a world in which people grow old and die; in which sinners live a hundred years, and then are cursed; in which people build houses and plant vineyards, and in which the lives of the people are as the age of a tree. While this is certainly superior to the Jerusalem of the past, in which crime shortened life and made it bitter, resulting even in the overthrow of the nation, yet it is not that age beyond the final judgment, beyond the growth of the wheat with the tares, and therefore in that kingdom which flesh and blood cannot inherit.

New Testament Ideas. It can hardly be doubted that in 2 Pet. 3:13, this very passage is referred to as a promise yet unfulfilled. After speaking of the day of God when the heavens shall be dissolved and the elements melt with fervent heat, he adds, "But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Now it is evident that the apostle expresses anticipations which this prophecy strictly interpreted does not compass. How then can he refer to it? This is explainable only by noting the limitations of this prophecy. The difficulty is not with the New Testament writer, but it lies in the fact that no prophet knows just when or in what manner the thing which he foresees will

take place. He here describes what has not been fulfilled, but what he expected to occur immediately after the Exile. He foresaw that God would bring about a new world far better than the past had been, but did not see that the perversity of men would delay it indefinitely, nor was he able to separate that new age from that immediately before him.* In these respects the New Testament writer has a clearer vision and better perspective. This is another example of the gradual unfolding of divine revelation. Compare also Rev. 21:1.

The Gathering of Nations. The gathering of all nations and tongues and their seeing the glory of God are foretold, but such a gathering has not come to pass. How are we to understand the message? It is an ideal prophetic scene. The prophet pictures the coming of many nations to destroy Jerusalem; but Jehovah "sets a sign among them," by accomplishing such an overthrow of their forces as that an escape is miraculous. He then sends the escaped ones as messengers to the distant parts of the world to tell of Jehovah's famous deed; and the result will be that the nations will send

*The comment of Delitzsch on this prophecy is worthy of study: "The Old Testament prophet is not yet able to discriminate the elements in the future which the seer of the Apocalypse separates into their successive periods. Of a blessed world beyond, the Old Testament in general teaches nothing. Beyond this world lies Hades. A heaven with blessed men is unknown to the Old Testament. Around the throne of God there are only angels, not men. And before the Risen One has ascended to heaven, heaven is really not open for men, and hence also there is no heavenly Jerusalem, the descent of which upon earth can be hoped for. Accordingly in any case, in Old Testament prophecy, the eschatological idea of the new Cosmos coalesces with that of the millennium. It is exactly the same with lxvi. 23 f. Keil rightly requires us to measure this passage by the same rule as lxv. 19 ff. For in both cases what is depicted lies beyond the new creation of heaven and earth, lxv. 17; lxvi. 22. In neither case, however, does the prophet depict what lies beyond in the colors of this world; on the contrary, in both cases, to his perspective, the final renewal of the world melts into one with the prelude of that renewal in this present order of things. It is not till we reach the New Testament that the new creation enters as a partition wall between here and yonder; Old Testament prophecy brings the new creation itself into this world, and knows no Jerusalem of the blessed world beyond distinct from the new Jerusalem of the millennium."—Delitzsch 'Commentary on Isaiah.

to Jerusalem all the Israelite captives as if they were sacred oblations to God. It must be evident that the object of such a vision is to impress Israel with the fact that a return from captivity is not an impossible thing in the hands of God. If we ask, why this did not happen as described, our answer must be that a poetic, idealistic vision, intended only to set a thought, should not be expected to be literally realized. The real element in the utterance, that God will care for His people, that He will accomplish His purposes with Israel in spite of all seeming obstacles, and will bring even His enemies to be His servants, is being fulfilled abundantly.

The Judgment. The judgment which these chapters depict is not the final judgment of the New Testament; but, as the destruction of the gathered nations just considered, it is conceived to be a punishment of idolatry and a vindication of Jehovah's interest in righteous Israel. In like manner the dead bodies consumed by the worm that shall not die and the fire that is not quenched, are not intended to present those who are to suffer the fires of eternal perdition; but rather these are the bodies of the slain of the gathered nations, lying outside the city of Jerusalem and being burned as a riddance. It is most natural, however, that these strong, poetic figures should be employed also by New Testament writers to express the doom of the wicked under the last judgment.

**The Close of
the Book.**

It is something of a disappointment that the book of Isaiah which contains much that is exquisitely beautiful, should close with paragraphs in which the joys of Israel alternate with the doom of the wicked and the destruction of dead bodies. We must not neglect the fact that much of this doom falls upon Israelites themselves who have the honor to hear these gracious promises, but who turn from them to the abominations of the heathen with whom they have mingled during the Exile. The last chapter is but the inevitable sequel of all that has gone before; for if God promises good, it must be on the condition of faithfulness to Him, which some are too obstinate to accept. Their downfall cannot be

averted. They willed it; who can withhold it? It was not the pleasure of God, nor was it the pleasure of the righteous; but it was their own perversity, for which they, and no others, are responsible. The picture may be sad, even disappointing; and yet it is the sure issue of every gracious approach of God to man. The lesson is Messianic. The whole history of Israel, the struggling out of exile back into divine favor, the persevering appeals of the prophetic preacher, the wavering but growing faith, the allurements of unrestrained vices, the discouragements besetting the better choice, the final separation of the true from the faithless and the recompense of both—all compose a wondrous parallel to that conflict which attends the gospel proclamation today in every community to which it is carried. It is a great book, which, like a metallic mirror, is made the brighter because it was wrought out under the heat of Israel's greatest crisis, and most perfectly reflects that age, in which first the Lord Himself, and then every man, is brought to a personal crisis in the face of supreme duty.

Section VI. Prophecies of the Spirit and Vindication

The Date of Joel.

The time at which the prophecies of Joel were produced is uncertain; but it is generally conceded that it was either before the beginning of the eighth century B. C., or as late as the Persian period of Jewish history. The book assigns no date for its own composition, or for the work of the prophet whose name it bears. It makes no reference to Syria, Assyria, or Babylon, which are frequently mentioned by the prophets from the eighth to the sixth century; and since the nation of Judah was in a desperate condition at the time of Joel's ministry, it is probable that he would have named one of these nations if he had written at a time when their power was seriously felt in Palestine. The book does mention the Phoenicians and Philistines (3:4), the Egyptians and Edomites (3:19); but in such a manner as to leave the date still undefined. Since the book refers to no king of Judah, but makes emphatic mention of priests, some scholars have insisted

that it belongs to the Persian period, when Judah had no king, and the high priest was the nation's leader. This view is the more supported recently by an accumulation of linguistic materials that seem inconsistent with the time of Amos and Hosea. It is fair to say that so much may be urged in favor of either date that agreement among scholars has not been reached.

1. *The Outpouring of the Spirit. Joel ii. 28-32.*

Occasion. Whatever may be the period of Joel's ministry, it was at a time of great distress by a plague of locusts which had devastated the land (1:2-8); which was followed by a severe drought with which the country was parched (1:9-12); and then the nation is called to repentance, fasting and a solemn assembly (1:13, 14). Joel announces that "The day of Jehovah is at hand," that it is a time of ruin and woe which may be averted only by penitence and prayer (1:15-2:17). It seems that the people promptly yielded to this exhortation, and the prophet describes the fulness of the divine blessings which follow: the locusts are driven away, the former and latter rains of the autumn and early winter fall abundantly, and Jehovah is among his people (2:18-27). Joel then gives the following prediction:

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of Jehovah cometh. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of Jehovah shall be delivered; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those that escape, as Jehovah hath said, and among the remnant those whom Jehovah doth call."

Adaptation. There is a beautiful adaptation in this prophecy to the conditions of the people. The natural drought was due to a spiritual drought, because the famine was understood to be a judgment sent upon the people because they did not duly recognize Jehovah. The repentance brought a down-pouring of rain; and so also repentance will bring an

outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh. The giving of the rain is represented as a type of the greater gift of the Spirit.

**An Ideal
Prophecy.**

In meaning, the prophecy is certainly ideal, and hence greater than was ever fully realized.

The Apostle Peter quotes this passage in the second chapter of Acts, and applies it to the gift of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost; but since not all flesh was present at that time, this at best could be only a beginning of fulfilment. Strictly the language in Acts (1:26-2:4) limits the gift as respects its spectacular form to the apostles, but they promise to those who accept the gospel that the gift shall be extended to them upon obedience (Acts 2:38; cf. 5:32). As the world becomes obedient, the gift of the Spirit becomes more nearly universal; hence its universality is also an ideal, and cannot be perfectly realized. It is only in the progress of the Messianic kingdom, according to the New Testament teaching, that it can approach realization.

**Fulfilment
Delayed.**

The language of Joel places the outpouring of the Spirit after the restoration of abundant fruitage due to the reviving rains, and not necessarily connected immediately with them. Doubtless, as other prophets often do, he employed the historical circumstances as a favorable occasion to foretell an event far removed from the immediate conditions. We found such to be the case in the prophecies of Noah, Judah, David and others. There is no record of so remarkable an outpouring of the Spirit during the history of the Jews in the Old Testament. Even in the New Testament it does not appear during the lifetime of Jesus, nor until the ascension and coronation of the Messiah, and it thus becomes his royal gift to his citizens. According to a New Testament interpretation, "all flesh" means all who enter into the kingdom of Christ. In the nature of the case it could not include any animals below the human race; and on account of sin and unworthiness, it must include only those who escape iniquity by loyalty to Jehovah. In this respect the teaching of Peter on Pentecost is the most reasonable and satisfactory solution of the prophetic enigma.

**Apostolic
Application.**

In the New Testament, distinctions are apparent which this does not compass. (1) The bestowal of the Spirit on two occasions, and apparently only two, is called a "baptism," one on the apostles on Pentecost ten days after the ascension of Jesus, and the other on the household of Cornelius (Acts 1:5; 2:4; 11:16), in both cases accompanied by such a power of tongues and prophecy as marked an overwhelming envelopment of the human spirits in the divine Spirit. (2) The Spirit attended with supernatural powers, healings, prophecy, tongues, and other gifts, was bestowed through the laying on of apostolic hands (Acts 8:19; 19:6); and this also seems to have ceased with the death of the apostles. (3) The Spirit was promised to every believer upon his primary obedience to the gospel (Acts 2:38; 5:32); and this is recognized in the church as universal and independent of miraculous powers, and with like character may be regarded as continuing to this day (Rom. 8:9; Eph. 2:22, et al.). It may be presumed that Joel's prophecy includes all of these; and in this very respect he foresees a fulness of divine blessing, which in his own day was enjoyed by only a few prophets.

**When the
"Wonders,"**

It is confessedly difficult to understand just what are the "wonders in the heavens and in the earth; blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke," turning of the sun "into darkness and the moon into blood." This also appears to be an ideal picture of all nature coming into judgment; but no such natural phenomena have appeared. The earthquake and the darkness at the death of Jesus, together with many natural obscurations of the sun or moon in later times, do not fill the prophetic description, and hence cannot be accepted as fulfilments. Some persons have suggested the fall of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar or under Titus, but in neither case did these wonders appear. It seems better to understand them either as a figurative expression for a great change in God's plan of dealing with men, or as things yet future and to be realized at the end of the world. To the latter might be urged the objection that it makes a violent separation of the outpouring of the Spirit and the manifestations of wonders which Joel has placed

together. In favor of the former are the facts that the Hebrews often used very strong figures to denote great changes, and that when the kingdom of Christ was established, God's former manner of dealing with the Jews in national form and according to Mosaic institutions came to an end, and henceforth he dealt with them as individuals and just as with the Gentiles. From the national point of view this would be as great and momentous a change as the events described would be in the course of nature. It is certain that this great change began on the very day on which the Spirit was poured out upon the apostles, though its consummation did not come until the fall of Jerusalem under Titus; for the establishment of the church was the beginning of God's new dealing, while the fall of the city was the end of the old.

2. *Israel's Vindication and Prosperity. Joel iii.*

Fitness of the Prophecy.

Just as the locusts had ravaged the land, so also the enemies of Judah had overrun the country; and just as the locusts were being swept away, so all these national enemies are to be visited with divine judgment. Accordingly, this chapter presents a vivid description of the nations gathered together before Jehovah awaiting His decision against them. To make the scene more striking the valley of Jehoshaphat is cited as the scene of judgment. This is probably the valley in which were once gathered the enemies of Jehoshaphat, the Ammonites, Moabites and Edomites, whom Jehovah overthrew without a battle for Judah's relief; on account of which the place was named the Valley of Beracah, meaning Valley of Blessing, because Judah blessed the Lord for His deliverance (2 Chr. 20:22-26). There was, therefore, fitness in selecting this valley for Joel's poetic picture of judgment against Judah's enemies. These peoples are charged with parting Jehovah's land and selling the children of Judah, both boys and girls, into the slavery of distant nations. The closing verses of the chapter (14-21) describe the prospective scene.

“Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! for the day of

Jehovah is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. And Jehovah will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake; but Jehovah will be a refuge unto his people, and a stronghold to the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am Jehovah your God, dwelling in Zion my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the brooks of Judah shall flow with waters; and a fountain shall come forth from the house of Jehovah, and shall water the valley of Acacias. Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolated wilderness, for the violence done to the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land. But Judah shall abide forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation, And I will cleanse their blood, that I have not cleansed: for Jehovah dwelleth in Zion.”

**Poetic and
Ideal.**

This description is clearly poetic and ideal, as the strong figures of speech plainly attest.

The darkening of the sun and moon, the shaking of the heavens and the earth, the dropping of sweet wine from the mountains, the flowing of milk from the hills, and the fountain flowing from the house of Jehovah across the Jordan to the valley of Acacias, all manifest the poetic character of the scene. Of course, a literal fulfilment is not to be expected, and no such fulfilment has occurred. One by one the wicked nations fell, and most of them have ceased to exist; and probably their fall may be taken as a type of the final judgment of the world in which all the enemies of Jehovah will be overthrown. In any case the important feature of the prophecy is the implication that Jehovah is with His people, protecting them from their enemies, and preserving them unto the accomplishment of His good purposes.

**Messianic
Elements.**

The Messianic elements of this prediction would seem to be (1) the overthrow of the enemies of Jehovah, which is to be progressively accomplished until its completion at the end of the world; (2) the vindication of Jehovah's chosen nation, by protecting them from their foes, who seek to extirpate them; (3) the dwelling of Jehovah with His people, so that all shall know Him, that Zion may be holy, and that strangers shall no more pass through the sacred city in hostility; (4) the prosperity which is given by

Jehovah to His people; and (5) the cleansing of the people from sin, for the reason that Jehôvâh is to dwell in their midst, and cannot dwell with sin.

**Why Thought
to be
Messianic.**

Much of this, if not all of it, might have been said without having the Messiah and his work directly in mind; for the Hebrews in the prophet's own day understood that Jehovah was dwelling in their midst, vindicating their cause and cleansing them from sin by means of their sacrificial offerings. Nevertheless, the prophet does not speak of what already is, but rather what shall be, and evidently looks forward to a time when these things shall be true in a more eminent degree. Such a time can hardly be cited in the history of the Jews before the coming of the Messiah. Indeed, the overthrow of Jehovah's enemies and the vindication of His people has not yet been fully accomplished, but remains to be consummated at the end of the Christian age. New Testament writers evidently anticipated that there should be on earth men triumphantly hostile to God until the end of the world.*

*Jesus himself taught that when his final coming shall suddenly occur, "one shall be taken, and one left" (Matt. 24:37-41). Paul also anticipated the work of the "lawless one," who should continue to deceive men till he should be destroyed at the coming of Christ. 2 Thess. 2:8-12.

CHAPTER IX:

PROPHECIES OF THE RESTORATION.

Decree of Cyrus.

Babylon was taken by Cyrus, and became a part of the Persian Empire in 539 B. C. The book of Ezra informs us that in his first year, probably 538, Cyrus issued a decree giving permission to the Hebrews to return to Palestine; that more than forty thousand promptly (perhaps in 537 or 536) removed from Babylonia, carrying with them the sacred vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the old temple at Jerusalem and which had since been captured by the Persians; that under the governor, Sheshbazzar, "a prince of Judah," appointed by the Persian ruler, the Jews were colonized in Jerusalem, and began the building of the temple. It is certain, however, that although this decree was favorable, great numbers did not return from Babylon and other lands, and consequently never became identified with the new community.

Events at Jerusalem.

Foremost among the exiles was a descendant of the royal line of David, named Zerubbabel, who seems to have succeeded Sheshbazzar as governor, and who took a prominent part in the religious developments of the new colony. For their high priest the Jews selected Joshua who by his Aaronic descent was duly entitled to that honor. It is recorded in Ezra 3:8 ff. that in the second year after the return an effort was made to rebuild the temple, which proceeded as far as the laying of the foundation and a celebration of that event; but the work was suddenly brought to an end by the interference of enemies, presumably the Samaritans

who were refused a share in the work and worship with the Jews. During the remaining ten years of the reign of Cyrus, closing in 529, the Jews secured no better terms with their neighbors; but they were harassed by foes without and famine and poverty at home. The reign of Cambyses brought no relief; for the presence of the Persian army more than once on the Philistine border doubtless became much more a burden than a help. Probably the Samaritans stood ready to prevent at any time the importation of those timbers from Lebanon which were necessary to the completion of the temple. The Jews were therefore occupied with the building of houses of residence and the replanting of vineyards, orchards and fields.

1. *The Rebuilding of the Temple.*

Condition of the People.

When Darius came to the throne of Persia in 521, the people of Jerusalem were yet without a temple, and the prospect seemed no brighter. During the eighteen years of their struggle fortune had not smiled continuously upon them; but rather Persian patronage failed, drought parched the land, money leaked away, and harvests brought a meager income. The old hopes gradually withered in their hearts, and their early enthusiasm for the house of the Lord sank almost to indifference. The prophetic dreams by which they were led to make the return had dissolved from view, and a day of hard toil and unrequiting care had overtaken them. It was a battle with a barren soil and parsimonious clouds. They regarded it more a question of finding a subsistence and defending their homes against their foes than of realizing their former expectations. Just at this time the prophet Haggai addresses them.

(1) The First Message.

In the second year of Darius, 520, and the sixth month, Haggai came to the governor and high priest to insist that Jehovah desired of them the building of the temple at once, even though the people did not regard the season as auspicious. They were inconsistent in building good houses for themselves and neglecting the house of Jehovah, especially while they were looking to Him for provision and pro-

tection. It was a clear, distinct and effective message, as follows:

Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your own ceiled houses, while this house lieth waste? Now therefore thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.

Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith Jehovah. Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith Jehovah of hosts. Because of my house that lieth waste, while ye run every man to his own house. Therefore for your sake the heavens withhold the dew, and the earth withholdeth its fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the grain, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labor of the hands.—Haggai 1:4-11.

An Important Problem.

Just at this place a problem confronts the modern student of prophecy, as it also weighed heavily on the hearts of the Jews to whom our prophet spoke. We have seen what glorious things were pictured to the exiles before their return, how rich they should become, how the nations should contribute to their prosperity, and how numerous should be the children of the mother city, if they would but refound the Judean state. It is now some eighteen years since the exiles hearkened to that prophetic call; and how has it all turned out? Their neighbors have brought them no help, but have hindered their work; their resources have become almost exhausted, and the nations have contributed nothing since Cyrus' first assistance. Drought and famine and pestilence have driven the unhappy settlers to disappointment and despondency. How is all this to be explained?

Haggai's Explanation.

We feel an especial interest in considering Haggai's explanation. He declares that the misfortunes have multiplied upon the people, because they have cared for their own houses and neglected the house of Jehovah. They had begun to build the temple; but being hindered, they had abandoned the work as a hopeless task. Jehovah was withholding His blessings, to remind them that they

were needlessly withholding from Him the service which they ought long since to have rendered. Haggai as a resident among the people for years must have known that there was no sufficient reason for the long delay in building the temple, and that along with this delay had come a sad decline of faith and zeal. It was in the prophet's view really a defection from Jehovah; and it was receiving a well-merited punishment.

**Explanation
Considered.**

In the study of prophecy, however, we are forced to ask ourselves whether this fully explains our difficulties. Did the predicted blessings attend the returning exiles at the first? When faith was strong and zeal was warm, when the enthusiasm of the people was greatest and the restoration was undertaken with heroism, did those signal promises of the exilic prophets find fulfilment step by step with the advancing companies? If so, when and why did they become discouraged? Doubtless Haggai's prophecy furnishes a clue to the whole situation. There was a lack of faith from the very first. Comparatively few of the exiles had faith enough to return at all; and there is reason to believe that those who did go forth from Babylon went with trepidation and were easily alarmed by their foes and turned aside from the sacred task of restoring the temple. While we must not forget that many of those promises were poetical exaggerations, intended to awaken hope and lend attraction to the work of re-establishing the nation, yet doubtless if the Jews had followed the voice of Jehovah with greater loyalty, they would have suffered less disappointment. God does not promise in vain, and certainly does not mock devout and earnest faithfulness.

**(2) The Second
Message.**

Although Haggai had reason to reprove the neglect of holy duties, religious devotion had not vanished from the hearts of the people of Jerusalem; but rather it was easily stirred to action by the prophet's appeal. Immediately the governor, the high priest and the people began the work of building the temple, and it was continued steadily for four years, and completed in 516, the sixth year of Darius' reign (Ezra 6:14, 15). After the work was fairly begun,

and the dimensions of the building were fully decided, Haggai brought a second message to Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the high priest, to encourage those that were made sad by the inferiority of the new temple as compared with that which Solomon had built. It is a brief word, as follows:

Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory? and how do you see it now? is it not in your eyes as nothing? Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith Jehovah; and be strong O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith Jehovah, and work; for I am with you, saith Jehovah of hosts, according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, and my Spirit abode among you: fear ye not. For thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations; and the precious things of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith Jehovah of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith Jehovah of hosts. The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, saith Jehovah of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith Jehovah of hosts.—Hag. 2:3-9.

The Divine Presence.

The first ground of cheer to the builders is the oracle of Jehovah, "I am with you." This is proposed in contrast with the long continued blight and failure of harvests, which were interpreted as a withdrawal of Jehovah's presence and providence. This promise of divine attendance is compared to that covenanted to Israel at the Exodus, when Jehovah said that they should be His people, and He would be their God. The Septuagint does not contain this allusion to the ancient covenant, and its genuineness has been further suspected, because it well fits the occasion of this prophecy which was delivered during the feast of Tabernacles, and might have been interpolated on that account. On the other hand, it might be genuine on that account; for, indeed, had it been here a misfit, it would be still more suspicious. Undoubtedly the divine attitude toward Israel as respects conditional presence and blessing is the same as formerly; for it is always dependent upon faithfulness, and yet never wholly withdrawn.

The Shaking of the Nations

Another ground of courage is the promise, "I will fill this house with glory." The nations are to be shaken, probably with wars and revolutions, and the changes shall be great like the shaking of heaven and earth and

sea and land. This shaking will remove the hostility of the nations, and cause them to contribute to the glory of the new temple. This brought comfort to those who might fear another attack of the Samaritans; and we have no account of another attack from that source while the building was going on. We know, moreover, that during the early years of Darius' reign he waged many wars with revolting provinces; but, as the book of Ezra informs us (chap. vi.), he decreed the liberty of the Jews to continue their building, and even provided for their assistance. Probably much more than this is meant by the shaking of the nations and their gifts, but certainly this is in keeping with the promise.

The Precious Things.

Jehovah promises that "the precious things of all nations shall come," and that "the latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former." The A. V. literally translates the Hebrew "desire" instead of "precious things;" and from the earliest times Christian scholars have interpreted "the desire of all nations" to be the Messiah, whose presence at the temple should be its transcendent glory. This would certainly be a beautiful and attractive interpretation if only we had assurance that it is correct. It is rendered doubtful, however, when we note that the Hebrew verb for "come" is in the plural, and hence probably the noun should have been pointed in the Hebrew so as to be plural, which would not require any change of the original letters. It would then mean "desirable things." In fact, the Septuagint translators two hundred years before Christ understood the noun in the plural, and so rendered it. The old Italic version does the same. Our revised versions have followed these older versions practically in both the text and the margin. In this case, the prophecy means that the nations will so lavishly give their offerings for the temple that its wealth and adornment will exceed those of the former building. This may be a strong hyperbolic utterance; but still it truly expresses the good intentions of Jehovah toward His people in the latter days.

(3) The Third Message.

About two months after the Feast of Tabernacles Haggai brought his third message. He began by asking the priests whether an object touched by a person bearing a holy article would also become holy; and they said it would not. He then asked whether an object touched by an unclean person would be deemed unclean; and they answered that it would. He then teaches them that their faithlessness has made them unclean before God, and He has counted everything they touch as unclean; hence their harvests have failed, and all their works have been smitten with mildew and blasting. In contrast, however, with the principle that a holy thing will not make other things holy, he urges that the holy temple now being erected will sanctify the people in the sight of God, and that from the very day on which the foundations are laid Jehovah's blessings will begin. God will therefore be more generous with them than their own principles would lead them to expect.

(4) The Fourth Message.

On the same day of the last message Haggai bore the following word from Jehovah to Zerubbabel the governor of Judah:

I will shake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms; and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother. In that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith Jehovah, and will make thee as a signet; for I have chosen thee, saith Jehovah of hosts.—Hag. 2:21-23.

Significance.

Here the shaking of the nations is more clearly defined. It means the overthrow of these kingdoms, thrones and military forces which are arrayed against the Jews; and this, by way of implied contrast, signifies that the elect people shall be able to succeed. It is but a strong Hebrew manner of saying that no opposition to the Jews by any other nation shall prevent their accomplishing the steadfast purpose of Jehovah. Besides this, Zerubbabel, a descendant of David in the royal line, has been chosen by Jehovah, and is to receive special honor at His hands. Zerubbabel is to be Jeho-

vah's signet; and since in ancient times the signet or seal was made of precious stone and used to stamp official authority upon a document, it signified at once great value and royal power. Zerubbabel is then to be very precious to Jehovah and to carry His divine authority. This seems to continue the promises to David concerning his posterity, and thus they are handed on toward the Messiah, whose preciousness and authority should amply fulfil all the Hebrew hope.

2. *Jehovah's Dwelling in Jerusalem.*

The Prophet Zechariah.

The work of Haggai was reinforced by that of another prophet in Jerusalem called "Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo," whose first dated oracle was announced November, 520, and the last was given December, 518, but concerning whom we know little more. If he was the Zechariah of the house of Iddo mentioned in the book of Nehemiah (12:12-17), he became the head of his father's house during the priesthood of Joiakim, the successor of Joshua who was serving at the time of these prophecies. He must in that case have been comparatively a young man when he gave these messages. His style is very marked, and particularly his numerous visions must have impressed his hearers and made his messages the more effective with the common people. His immediate object, as indicated by his writings, seems to have been to strengthen the confidence of the Jews in Jehovah, that the temple might be hastened and the state established in the service of God.

(1) The Chosen City.

Preparatory to the chief glory of Jerusalem, the prophet first relates a vision of a horseman attended by other horses, that are said to be appointed by Jehovah to traverse the earth, and who report that the world is at rest. The quietude of the nations affords no prospect of their restoring the glory to Jerusalem; and hence arises the question addressed to Jehovah, "How long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?" The following prophecy is a response to this question:

Cry thou, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy. And I am very sore displeased with the nations that are at ease; for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction. Therefore thus saith Jehovah: I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies; my house shall be built in it, saith Jehovah of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth over Jerusalem. Cry yet again, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: My cities shall yet overflow with prosperity: and Jehovah shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.

And I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, four horns. And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What are these? And he answered me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem. And Jehovah showed me four smiths. Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These are the horns that scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head; but these are come to terrify them, to cast down the horns of the nations, which lifted up their horn against the land of Judah to scatter it.—Zech. 1:14-21, Eng. Bible; 1:14-2:4, Heb. Bible.

The Word of Comfort.

The special message of comfort here given is the fact that Jehovah has chosen Jerusalem, on account of which He will return to it with mercies, and the whole circle of cities shall overflow with prosperity. Before this can be accomplished, the horns that scattered Judah must be cast down; and this means that the national powers that have hitherto afflicted the chosen people must fall under the divine hand. This well accords with the closing utterance of Haggai spoken just two months earlier, and voices again the sentiment of the later chapters of Isaiah.

(2) The Unwalled City.

In the next vision the prophet sees a young man with a measuring line going to measure Jerusalem, as if the walls were to be rebuilt so as to preserve the ancient size of the fortress. The following message, to which a brief lyric is appended, is sent by an angel to the young man, to signify that the city is hereafter to assume entirely a different character from that of the past, because Jehovah will dwell there and be an all-sufficient Protector:

Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls, by reason of the multitude of men and cattle therein. For I, saith Jehovah, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.

Ho, ho, flee from the land of the north, saith Jehovah;
Ho, Zion, escape, thou dweller with the daughter of Babylon.
For as the four winds of heaven I dispersed you, saith Jehovah.

For thus saith Jehovah of hosts: After glory he hath sent me unto the nations which plundered you; for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye: for lo! I will shake my hand over them, and they shall be as spoil to those that served them; and ye shall know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent me.

Sing out and rejoice, O daughter of Zion;
For lo! I come and will dwell in thy midst, saith Jehovah.
And many nations shall join themselves to Jehovah in that day,
And shall be to me a people,
And I will dwell in thy midst

(and thou shalt know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent me unto thee).

- And Jehovah will make Judah his inheritance,
- His portion in the holy land,
- Be silent, all flesh, before Jehovah;
- For he is waked up out of his holy habitation.—Zeeh. 2:4-13.

Prophetic Imagery.

This announces that the city will not need walls, since Jehovah will be a protection; and it cannot have walls, because the number of people and cattle will be too great to be enclosed in a limited fortification. We discover in this prediction the same ideas that were expressed in various prophecies in former periods; but they are not in the same form. If we compare Isaiah 33:14-~~14~~ (see p. 178), or Psalm xlvii. (p. 182), in which Zion is “a place of broad rivers and streams,” we observe how readily the prophet here escapes the imagery of his predecessors, and yet holds to the great, central truth, that Zion is to be the dwelling-place of God, and be unspeakably blessed by His presence. This shows what many of us may be slow to consider, that these writers are not intending to predict literally the physical conditions of the city; but they use these descriptions of rivers, tents, pinnacles, towers, and walls as vehicles of the far greater conceptions of Jehovah’s unfailing devotion to His people and His determination to accomplish a Messianic purpose through them.

The Lyric.

The lyric portion of this passage may be a quotation, and has an exhortation to flee from Babylon as if it had been composed during the Exile; but possibly this exhortation is intended for that large part of Israel which remained in Babylon after their companions returned to Jerusalem. Certainly in the main thought the verses are appropriate to the prophecy with which they are here connected.

They contain two leading thoughts: (1) that God will dwell in the midst of the Jews as if Judah is to be the portion of His inheritance in the holy land; and (2) that in the future many nations are to join themselves to Jehovah, and become a part of His own people. These ideas are not new in Old Testament prophecy, but none the less Messianic; and here they find a new setting, since the Jews have begun the restoration of their commonwealth, and the promise stands in marked contrast with an unpropitious outlook.

A third prophecy very similar in sentiment to (3) **The City of Fidelity.** these is recorded in Zech. viii. It is composed of a series of oracles, of which the exact dates are unknown, although they seem connected with that in the beginning of chapter vii., which was delivered in the fourth year of Darius, 518. Selected extracts from these oracles will exhibit the more important utterances:

Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great wrath. Thus saith Jehovah: I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called the city of fidelity; and the mountain of Jehovah of hosts, The holy mountain. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. * * * Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Behold, I will save my people out of the land of the rising and out of the land of the setting of the sun; and I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness * * * Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: There shall yet come peoples and the citizens of many cities; and the citizens of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to entreat the favor of Jehovah, and to seek Jehovah of hosts. I will go too. Yea, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek Jehovah of hosts in Jerusalem, and to entreat the favor of Jehovah. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: In those days shall ten men take hold—out of all the languages of the nations, they shall take hold—of the skirt of a Jew and say, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.—Zech. 8:2-5, 7, 8, 20-23.

Condition in the City. The Zion of coming days will not be like that of the past. It will not be a city of unbelief, built upon a mountain of iniquity; but it shall wear the name, City of Fidelity, and its site shall be known as

Holy Mountain. This is an effective way of setting a high ideal of faithfulness and righteousness before the inhabitants of the city, which ought to act as a powerful influence for their good. As a result of the noble character of the people, the plagues which in former years carried away the population and made children scarce and old age rare, will not appear; and the city will exhibit as a sure sign of divine blessing a scene of old men and women sitting in the streets and boys and girls in playful glee. In this most beautiful picture of social enjoyment the prophet portrays the peace, health and prosperity of Jerusalem.

**Future
Accessions.**

While all these prophecies are brightening the hilltops of the future, one dark cloud is ever hanging over the Judean state, and that is the wretched paucity of its citizenship. There are but a few thousand people in all Judah, and it looks as if but a few more are coming out of the exilic lands. How can this insignificant colony hope for wealth, strength and renown? To meet this discouragement, the prophet brings two messages from Jehovah. (1) He will bring back the exiles from the east and from the west, will settle them in Jerusalem, and will establish between Himself and them relations of mutual faithfulness. (2) The citizens of many cities will propose to each other to go to entreat the favor of Jehovah, and with common consent they will come to Jerusalem and mingle with the vast throng that shall gather about the new temple. To exhibit the future interest of the Gentiles in Jehovah, the prophet describes the action of ten men representing various nationalities taking hold of the skirt of a Jew, begging the privilege of worshiping his God. It is clear that the central truth of this prediction, the turning of the Gentiles to Jehovah, has been verified in fact, though the manner of it is far from universal.

**Prophetic
Mockery.**

That which more than all else astonishes the modern reader is the fact that the generation and the city for whose comfort and encouragement these things were spoken seem to have reaped from their fulfilment no benefits whatever. Comparatively few exiles returned to enlarge the state, and for several hundreds of years

few Gentiles entered into the worship of Jehovah. Did the prophet of God mock his people with a message from heaven? We may safely permit the facts to answer this question. The work of the prophet was twofold, to preserve the faith of his own generation and to prepare for the faith of a coming age. The promise of exiles returned and heathen converted accomplished both of these. It awakened the hopes of the Jews, without which all was lost, and it manifested Jehovah's interest in them, which quickened their faith into loyal service. These were greater blessings to them than teeming millions of people; and far beyond their day this promise provided for their children's appreciation of the inestimable work of Christ. This was not mockery, unless, indeed, it be mockery to promise a starving man a crumb and give him a loaf.

3. *The Man Named Branch.*

(1) Priests as Omens.

In two passages Zechariah foretells the coming of a man that shall be called Branch, and in either case the announcement is set in close connection with honors bestowed upon Joshua the high priest. In the third chapter is described a vision of Joshua standing before the angel of Jehovah and satan standing by as his accuser. Satan is rebuked, and Joshua, who had worn filthy garments, is arrayed in rich apparel and honored with a clean mitre. This evidently signifies that the high priest is vindicated before Jehovah against any possible accusations of unworthiness to fill the priestly office at the new temple, either on account of his personal sins or the sins of his people by which they were driven into the Exile. Jehovah declares His well determined grace and Joshua's acceptance by calling him a "brand plucked out of the fire;" for whatever may have withheld Joshua and his people from appearing before Jehovah in the past, their worship will henceforth be pleasing in His sight. Then follows the angel's address to Joshua:

Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee a place of access among these that stand by. Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou and thy

fellows that sit before thee; for they are men of omen: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant, Branch. For, behold, the stone that I have set before Joshua; upon one stone are seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith Jehovah of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. In that day saith Jehovah of hosts, shall ye invite every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig-tree.—Zech. 3:7-10.

**Office of
Joshua.**

On condition that Joshua should be obedient to Jehovah and faithful in office, he is to have the oversight of the temple and its courts and the high privilege of access to Jehovah's presence among the angels that stand before Him. This means that Joshua is to be a divinely appointed high priest with special tokens of acceptability. The greatest of all honors which shall come to Joshua and his fellow priests is that they shall be "men of omen." In Isa. 8:18 a similar remark is made concerning persons whose names were significant of coming events. Truly the name Joshua means Jehovah saves, and it is the same as Jesus; but since it is not probable that the other priests wore names so suggestive of the Messiah, it is likely that the office rather than the name prefigured some object then existent only in the divine purpose. It is their office, not their names, that receives emphasis in the context; and hence it must be in their official character that they are to serve as prototypes.

The Branch.

The text here indicates that the priests are to be "men of omen," because Jehovah will bring forth His servant, Branch. This close connection of the omens with the Branch implies that the priests were to be official types of that future personage. By the brevity of our prophetic records, which are doubtless only memoranda of what the author spoke to the people, nothing more concerning the Branch has been preserved to us, although the speaker must have made clear to Joshua this otherwise bare allusion. We can only assume that in thought he follows the utterances concerning the Branch made by Isaiah and Jeremiah (Isa. 4:2; 11:1; Jer. 23:5; 33:15). In these passages which we have already studied, we found evident forecasts of the Messiah; but it was always his royal, not his sacerdotal, office that was anticipated. Here the Branch is

clearly the official antitype of the priestly class. Various other prophecies (Ps. cx.; Ezek. xxi. 24-27, et al.), where the name Branch is not mentioned, have plainly foretold the priestly work of the Messiah.

The Stone.

The stone laid before Joshua may have been intended to fit into some place in the temple, and was to be engraved with the figures of seven eyes, doubtless to represent the omnipresence and ceaseless watchcare of God. The remark about the stone is here connected with the Branch so closely as to imply that it has a Messianic significance; and since it is an expression of the divine presence and oversight, it probably typifies the Messiah himself. This is confirmed by the attending promise that the iniquity of the land shall be removed; for the purging of sin belongs to the priestly office, and the forgiveness of iniquity accompanies the Messianic covenant (Jer. 31:34). This prophecy adds another Messianic element: "In that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, shall ye invite every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig-tree." This predicts a time of peace contemporary with the removal of iniquity and the rule of the Branch; and this accords with Isaiah's prophecy that in the reign of the Branch the most ferocious animals shall dwell peacefully with the most tender and timid (Isa. 11:6-9).*

(2) Crowns for Joshua.

Another prophecy of the Branch (Zech. 6:12-15) was delivered apparently about the same time as the former. Certain men had come over from Babylon to Jerusalem, and brought with them valuable gifts from the wealthier Jews in that land to aid the colonists in their

*While Zechariah's utterances exhibit many features parallel to those of earlier prophets, it does not follow that he borrowed excessively from them; for his predictions have conceptions, forms and settings quite his own. Without an effort to be original, and certainly making no attempt to avoid the thought of others, he aims chiefly at the conscience and life of his own generation as every genuine prophet did. He shows his independence of his predecessors also in his adaptation of prophecy to present conditions, not clinging servilely to the forms and advices suited to past emergencies; but catching the spirit of righteousness and hopefulness, he emphasizes the supreme duty of the hour.

struggles for a new temple. The prophet is told to take from these treasures enough of silver and gold to make crowns which are to be placed on the head of Joshua the high priest, and then to say:

Thus hath Jehovah of hosts spoken, saying, Behold, the man whose name is Branch: and he shall grow up out of his place; and he shall build the temple of Jehovah; even he shall build the temple of Jehovah; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both. And to Helem, and to Tobijah, and to Jedaiah, and to Hen the son of Zephaniah, the crowns shall be for a memorial in the temple of Jehovah. And they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of Jehovah; and ye shall know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent me unto you. And th's shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of Jehovah your God.

**Who the
Branch?**

Although Joshua is being crowned, he is not the Branch, who yet "shall grow up out of his place." Joshua is crowned only as a representative or type of the Branch, so that the prophecy may have a vividness that will deeply impress all present. Likewise Zerubbabel is not the Branch; for although the Branch shall build the temple of Jehovah, it cannot be the temple now under construction, since the Branch himself is a future personage.* Zerubbabel finished his temple in the sixth year of Darius' reign (Ezra 6:15), four years after it was begun (cf. Hag. 1:15). This does not allow time for any other person to have a part in the building of the structure. The prophet is clearly foretelling another building, the exact nature of which he does not define. We cannot, even if we were so disposed, devise a more reasonable interpretation, nor one more harmonious with other prophecies and the divine trend of events, than that suggested by the apostle Paul (1 Cor. 3:16, 17; Eph. 2:21), that the Christian

*Ewald supposed that the name of Zerubbabel was by accident lost from the text, and that one crown was for him and one for Joshua. George Adam Smith holds that there was to be but one crown, that the plural refers to circlets in that crown, and that Zerubbabel, not Joshua, was to wear it. He assumes that in a later age, when the high priest became the ruler of the nation, Joshua's name was substituted in the text for Zerubbabel's. It is possible that there was but one crown composed of circlets; but all these other suppositions seem gratuitous, as the text makes good sense as it stands.

Church is the temple, and therefore its builder the Branch is our Messiah. What other person, indeed, could Zechariah have meant than that one of whom the prophets long before had often spoken, and who must already have held a prominent place in Jewish hope? and whom else could his hearers have understood?

**A Double
Office.**

In addition to his being a builder of the temple, he shall have the glory of ruling on a throne and of being a priest on the throne. Here, as in Ps. cx., the coming one has a double office, that of king and that of priest; but here he is to be a ruler in peace, while in the Psalm he is to be a conqueror in war. These are remarkable prophecies; for at no time till later in Jewish history did Israel have a priest-king, and, as the Psalm indicates, there was no parallel to the prophetic idea, except that of Melchizedek. It cannot be thought for a moment that the notion was borrowed from the ancient Babylonian priest-kings, to which the prophetic disposition was decidedly averse. On this point the later chapters of Isaiah which severely upbraided the Babylonian religion are sufficient evidence. When the writer here says, "The counsel of peace shall be between them both," he hints that harmony does not always exist between contemporary kings and priests; and we are well aware that in the history of Israel and Judah the royal and sacerdotal orders sometimes represented opposing principles. The life of Jehoiada (2 Ki. xi.) abundantly illustrates that possibility. In the Messianic ruler the priest and king will be the same person, and hence the two offices will be perfectly harmonious.

**Why Not
Zerubbabel?**

The question has been raised by various writers (Hitzig, Orelli, and others), why was it not rather Zerubbabel, the civil ruler, that was crowned as the type of the Messiah? The seriousness of this question has led Ewald, G. A. Smith and others to assume that by error, accidental or designed, the name of Joshua has been substituted where Zerubbabel was written by the author of the text. But a reasonable answer may be offered that renders such critical conjecture unnecessary. It was Joshua, a priest, not Zerubbabel, a civil ruler, because the prophetic intent is to rivet

attention on the priestly character of the Branch. It was understood from many prophecies that he should be a descendant of David, and therefore a ruler of Israel; but that fact still left room for the possibility that the ruler and priest might not be concordant. On this matter all doubt is dissipated when it is distinctly understood that the future king and priest are to be the same person. Orelli properly calls this a "climax of development in the history of redemption."

4. *The Smitten Shepherd.*

The Date.

The time when chapters xii.-xiv. of Zechariah were written is a question of critical contention. Some hold that these chapters go with ix.-xi., and belong to the days of Isaiah, Jeremiah, or still later than the time of Zerubbabel. Others assign only the closing chapters to a late date, some urging as late a date as the closing of the prophetic canon will permit. Still others hold to the traditional unity of the entire book as the work of Zechariah. While a full discussion of these matters is reserved by the present writer to a later work, it is sufficient for the purpose of these pages to assume a date subsequent to the chapters already studied. The exact time has little bearing upon the interpretations here presented.

Great Mourning.

The prophet announces repentance and mourning before he tells the occasion of it. In Zech. 12:10-13:2, a lamentation like that in the valley of Megiddon where Josiah was slain, will be heard among the inhabitants of Jerusalem; but it will not be the wail of despair, but rather "the spirit of grace and supplication," that indicates a sorrow for sin. The mourning is made more dramatic by representing different families in separate throes of grief.

And I will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of

Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of the Shimeites apart, and their wives apart; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.

In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered.

Who Slain?

It is hinted here that the mourners are themselves guilty of putting some person to death who turns out to be very dear to them, but no hint as to his identity. In the expression, "they shall look unto me whom they have pierced," viewed as an utterance of Jehovah, we discover that the assumed crime pierces the heart of God also. The indefiniteness respecting the person killed may be due in part to some event that had recently occurred, which, though unknown to us, is accounted well known when the prophet writes, and therefore needs no explanation. We may not be surprised to note such indefiniteness throughout the works of the prophets; for it indicates only how much the seer suited his message to his own generation.

The Fountain.

In view of the penitence of the people a fountain for their cleansing is to be opened; and the fact that the house of David is specially mentioned as sharing both the penitence and the benefits of the fountain, suggests that the person killed and the opened fountain are connected with the Davidic family. It is not here implied, however, that the killing of the person opens the fountain for cleansing. It is implied, however, that the cleansing leads to an utter abandonment of all the remnants of idolatry in the land, so that even the names of the idols will be forgotten. Thus the cleansing will induce a firm loyalty to Jehovah.

The More Definite Statement.

In another passage, Zech., 13:7-9, the prophet defines more clearly who shall be smitten and his relation to Jehovah. It is Jehovah's shepherd, one that is so closely associated with God as to be called His "fellow."

Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith Jehovah of hosts. Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn my hand upon the little ones. And it

shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith Jehovah, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part into the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on my name, and I will hear them. I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, Jehovah is my God.

The Meaning. The meaning of the smiting now emerges in the light of the consequences. It is clearly a general persecution, in which the leader is the first to fall, and after him large numbers of his followers. The shepherd is not a prophet, but rather a ruler rejected by a portion of his people and slain through lack of appreciation. Later the slayers are overcome with grief, repent of their awful deed, and find a fountain of cleansing. A wave of persecution sweeps over the land; but a portion of the people, here for vividness estimated at one-third, are rescued, and become faithful adherents to Jehovah. Their very faithfulness is due to the refining effect of their afflictions. Their sufferings are not chargeable to Jehovah's disregard of them; for when the little ones, the weakest of them, need His help, He will turn His hand to their assistance.

Messianic Character. In Matt. 26:31 and Mark 14:27, Jesus applies this prophecy to Himself as the smitten shepherd and his disciples as the scattered sheep. We are by no means forced to regard them as the only persons within the range of prophetic vision, nor the only ones by whom a fulfilment could be accomplished; but there are good reasons for holding that in no other can the prophecy have so perfect a parallel and so great significance. Certainly many other leaders were smitten, and their followers put to rout, and to many their sorrows were a refining fire; but by the death of what other was a fountain of cleansing opened? and for what other scion of David pierced in persecution will the very slayers mourn as for an only son? Parallels, however, are not the best reasons. Those great principles of redemption which were purposed in the divine Mind, and were gradually being unfolded in prophecy as a preparation for the Messianic age are vastly more certain indications of Messianic intent. The rejection of the divinely chosen leader, and hence the piercing of Jehovah, the repentance of the

people, the cleansing from sin, and the consequent loyalty to Jehovah are of the very essence of Messianic thought, and the prophecy that makes these prominent must ever rank high in Messianic development.

**Relation to
the Servant.**

In certain respects this prophecy resembles that of the suffering Servant, Isa. liii. In both cases God's chosen one dies for others, and prepares a means of redemption from sin; but a marked difference appears in the matter of subsequent exaltation. Doubtless this accounts for the fact that Jesus freely quotes this passage and applies it to himself, but does not refer to the Servant at all. He modestly prefers those prophecies that do not relate to his honors, but rather to his rejection and the disappointment of his disciples. Those which forecast his glory are in better point in the hands of his apostles after his ascension. The matter of profound remark is, that all these utterances find their consummate significance in him alone.

5. That Remarkable Day.

First Passage.

In two passages separated from each other by those concerning the shepherd, the prophet sets forth a day of judgment against the hostile nations and a vindication of Judah and Jerusalem. In the first passage, Zech. xii. 1-9, the chief elements of the prediction are given, consisting of a siege of Jerusalem by the nations, their complete discomfiture by Jehovah, and the glory of Judah and the house of David.

Thus saith Jehovah, who stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him: Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of reeling unto all the peoples round about, and upon Judah also shall it be in the siege of Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all the peoples; all that burden themselves with it shall be sore wounded; and all the nations of the earth shall be gathered together against it. In that day, saith Jehovah, I will smite every horse with terror, and his rider with madness; and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the peoples with blindness. And the chieftains of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in Jehovah of hosts their God. In that day will I make the chieftains of Judah like a pan of fire among wood, and like a flaming torch among sheaves; and they shall

devour all the peoples round about, on the right hand and on the left; and they of Jerusalem shall yet again dwell in their own place, even in Jerusalem. Jehovah also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem be not magnified above Judah. In that day shall Jehovah defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of Jehovah before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

The Emphasis.

The emphasis of the prophecy is laid on Jehovah, "who stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him," in order to induce the concentration of all hope of future good in Him as its only Source. It is He that will smite the enemy with terror and madness; and it is He that will save Judah and defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The elect people must recognize their electing God, since otherwise their election itself will come to nought. This faith in Him is a condition of their help; for by it, as here promised, the weakest of them shall become a hero like David.

Second Passage.

In the other passage, Zech. xiv. 1-21, a fuller statement of the siege and consequent judgment is made. The city must be taken and spoiled, and half its population be carried to captivity; but a plague will befall the captors, consuming many, while the rest will unite with Judah in keeping the feasts of Jehovah. The style is marked with highly wrought figures, and well accords with the thought of this climax of Old Testament apocalypses.

Behold, a day of Jehovah cometh, when thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall Jehovah go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the mount of Olives shall be cleft midway toward the east and west by a very great ravine; and half of the mountain shall move northward, and half southward. And ye shall flee by the ravine of my mountains; for the ravine of the mountains shall reach unto Azel; yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah; and Jehovah my God shall come, and all the holy ones with thee. And it shall come

to pass in that day, that there shall not be light; the luminaries shall withdraw themselves; and it shall be a unique day which is famous to Jehovah; not day and not night; but it shall come to pass that at evening there shall be light. And it shall come to pass in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the western sea; in summer and in winter shall it be.

And Jehovah shall be king over all the earth. In that day shall Jehovah be One, and his name One. All the land shall be made like the Arabah, from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; and she shall be lifted up, and shall dwell in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananel unto the king's wine presses. And men shall dwell therein, and there shall be no more curse; but Jerusalem shall dwell safely.

And this shall be the plague with which Jehovah will smite all the peoples that have warred against Jerusalem: their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their sockets, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from Jehovah shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbor, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor. And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the nations round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in those camps, as that plague.

And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations that came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso of all the families of the earth goeth not up unto Jerusalem to worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, upon them there shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, upon them shall come* the plague with which Jehovah shall smite the nations that go not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations that go not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLY UNTO JEHOVAH; and the pots in Jehovah's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holy unto Jehovah of hosts; and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and boil therein; and in that day there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of Jehovah of hosts.

Concrete Forms.

In some respects this description appears extravagant, especially in the proposed topographical changes for the deliverance and blessing of Jerusalem. No one imagines that Mount Olivet has been, or will ever be, cleft

*This translation in this place follows the Septuagint and Syriac versions. The Hebrew inserts "not," and mars the sense.

asunder by a wide ravine, or that two rivers will flow in opposite directions from Jerusalem. Only a misunderstanding of Jewish methods of thought and speech could encourage such literalism. Properly viewed it is not even extravagance; for the prophet seeks to convey sober truth, which he merely clothes in concrete forms that it may find a deeper lodgment in the mind. The prophets assiduously avoid the abstract; and yet with all the concreteness of their descriptions, their lessons are abstract truths.

The Intent.

The intent of all this material, then, when taken in accord with the custom of Jewish prophets, is to emphasize Jehovah's determination to vindicate His own people against their foes, and bring all opposition, even though it be by Judah herself, either to disappointment or to happy submission. In this, three important objects are accomplished: (1) The dependence of Jerusalem upon Jehovah is made apparent. (2) A strong ethical restraint is exercised by the anticipated judgment of Jehovah against the unfaithful. (3) In times of persecution or other serious trial the hope of ultimate fortune by Jehovah's help will furnish a valuable support of faith and patience. These were vital matters at almost any time in the post-exilic history of Israel.

All Things Holy.

The closing paragraph, which is really the culmination of the prophecy, heavily underscores the idea of a cosmopolitan service of Jehovah. The feast of tabernacles is the test or sample of ritualistic observance; and the nations that do not meet the test must suffer punishment. Common vessels shall become sacred, and the smaller sacred vessels shall rival the larger in honor. This means that all things will become sacred, because all the people will be holy; and this is made the more emphatic by announcing that there will "be no more a Canaanite in the house of Jehovah." Thus this prophet foresees a time when the whole earth shall become loyal to the Most High and worthy to wear the title, "Holy to Jehovah." This is the farthest and highest ideal of Old Testament prophecy.

6. *The Coming Messenger. Malachi iii. 1-5, 16-18; iv.***The Book of Malachi.**

The name Malachi means "my messenger," and is so translated by the Septuagint (1:1), as if it were not a proper name. The Septuagint, however, carries the name Malachi at the head of the book. If it be not a proper name, we do not know the name of the prophet by whom the oracle was given. The term "governor" (1:8) seems to imply that when the book was written the Persians still held Palestine; and the allusion to worship at Jehovah's altar (1:10) indicates a time after the building of the temple in the days of Zerubbabel. Intermarriage with foreigners is rebuked (2:10-16), but not on the basis of law, as by Ezra (Ez. 10:3), but rather as a sin against Jehovah as the Father of His people. This points to a time previous to the coming of Ezra to Jerusalem in 458, approximately 460.

The Times.

After the days of Zechariah, a period of formalism came on, and Judah sank into religious indifference and many kinds of immorality. It was a time of disappointment that the Messianic blessings did not pour down upon the people, a time of faithlessness, disheartening and despondency. It was, as Farrar says, a serious "laxity and godlessness which called forth this last flush in the sunset of Hebrew prophecy." Hence the book contains a bold, direct rebuke of Judah's derelictions and sins.

The Rebuke.

Even the upright needed correction: for they observed the prosperity of the wicked, and "wearied Jehovah" by saying that they who do evil are good in His sight, and He delights in them. It seemed to them unjust that the evil-doer should be successful in business: and hence they asked, "Where is the God of justice?" In rebuke of this misconception of Jehovah's work, the following words were uttered:

Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me, and suddenly the Lord whom ye seek will come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire, behold, he cometh, saith Jehovah of hosts. But who can abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap; and he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he

will purify the sons of Levi, and refine them as gold and silver; and they shall offer unto Jehovah offerings in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasing unto Jehovah, as in the days of old, and as in ancient years. And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against the false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the sojourner from his right, and fear not me, saith Jehovah of hosts.—Mal. 3:1-5.

**Force of the
Message.**

The force of this response to the complaint of the righteous is, that Jehovah is not prospering the wicked; but rather He is reserving them to the time of His coming to judgment, and then He will deal with them according to their deserts. The coming of Jehovah, however will be preceded by the appearance of His messenger, who will prepare the way before Him. When Jehovah comes, His first work will be with the priests, the persons that are engaged in the service of God, that they may be made more acceptable; and then He will judge the wicked with a swift condemnation. Who the messenger is to be, the language in this paragraph does not certify.

**Another
Message.**

Another response to almost the same sentiment appears further on. The prophet accuses the faithful people of saying that it seems vain and unprofitable to serve Jehovah and to mourn over the sins of the nation, seeing that the proud are happy, the workers of wickedness are built up, and those who tempt God escape His judgment. Then he adds:

Then they that feared Jehovah spake [thus] one with another; and Jehovah hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared Jehovah, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith Jehovah of hosts, even mine own possession, in the day which I make; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not. For behold, the day cometh, it burneth as a furnace; and all the proud, and all that work wickedness shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith Jehovah of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings; and ye shall go forth, and gambol as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be

ashes under the soles of your feet in the day which I make, saith Jehovah of hosts.

Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, even statutes and ordinances. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.—Mal. 3:16-4: 6, Eng. Ver.

The Meaning.

Here the prophet informs his people that when they are talking one with another about the success of the wicked, God is planning just the opposite fortune; for He is writing in the book of His remembrance the names of those that fear Him, and preparing to own them as His peculiar possession on the coming day of vindication. When that day arrives, it will be easy to distinguish between the wicked and the righteous; for the wicked shall be as stubble before fire, and become as ashes beneath the feet of the upright. It is the same principle as that in the Parable of the Tares in the Wheat, let the good and bad grow together for the present, and a future judgment will bring its appropriate retributions. If the wicked prosper, it is only for a season; and let the faithful bide their time with patience till Jehovah, preceded by His messenger, shall come with discriminating justice.

Union of Law and Prophecy.

It is interesting to note the peculiar union of law and prophecy in the very last verses of the Old Testament. Judah is urged to remember the law given to Moses, which exhortation taken in conjunction with the approaching judgment implies that the keeping of this law is a condition of acceptance with God; nevertheless God will send Elijah the prophet to work with the people, lest they fall under a curse. Thus the last effort of prophecy will be in support of the law, supplementary to it, and yet to save the people from its curse. The second Elijah will deal with the hearts of men, will attempt to turn them into consonance with the law, and especially to fill them with that love that underlies and outlives all law. Indeed, it is the task of all prophecy, assuming the presence of the law and a knowledge of right, to quicken the consciences of men and to kindle within their hearts the spirit of

loving obedience. The prophet is God's messenger sent to His people to encourage and to help them to do His holy will.

**Application to
John.**

This prophecy concerning the coming messenger, called "Elijah the prophet," is unmistakably applied by Jesus to John the Baptist (Matt. 11:10; 17:10-13). Also the angel that foretold the birth of John announced that he should "go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just" (Luke 1:17). It is apparent that John did exactly such a work as is here foreseen, and accomplished that final prophetic task in behalf of his people which this utterance contemplates. The bold, reformatory spirit of John, removed from the courts of luxury, and unbending before the influences of a sinful generation, were singularly like that of the old-time prophet of Cherith and Carmel. The messenger came, and prepared the way before his Lord, that truly men might "abide the day of his coming." In the undying spirit of this prophecy men are now exhorted in the light of a better day to turn their hearts one toward another, that they may abide the final coming of him who will reward every man according to his works.

7. *The Ideal Man. Psalm xci.*

**Post-exilic
Psalms.**

It is very uncertain how many Psalms arose after the Exile, and yet more uncertain at what particular time any one of these was composed. Among others, the contents of Psalms xlvii., lxxxv., xci., xciii., xcv.-c. are such as to convince most scholars that they belong to this period. Their general thought relates to the exaltation and works of Jehovah and the consequent blessings of devout men. They are not primarily predictive, as many of the earlier Psalms, but are rather hymns of praise. It is because they describe ideal persons and conditions, which, Jehovah excepted, can find their realization only in the future, that we must consider them in connection with Messianic prophecy. The remarkable similarity of their contents renders it unnecessary to treat at length the

whole group. A study of the ninety-first, ninety-seventh and ninety-eighth will develop the leading messianic features.

Form of

Psalm xci.

The literary form of this Psalm is unusual. As our present Hebrew text stands, the first verse is an unfinished general statement concerning the man that is near to God; the second verse is the man's response, announcing his trust in Jehovah; verses 3-8 are addressed to the man advising him of the value of Jehovah's help; verse 9a is the man's reaffirmation of trust addressed to Jehovah; verses 9b-13 are a second address to the man regarding Jehovah's care; and verses 14-16 are Jehovah's remarks concerning the man, promising deliverance and long life. Some scholars, following the Septuagint and Syriac versions, change ver. 2, so as to make it read "he will say," instead of "I will say," and remove the responsive character of the first part of the poem; but the dramatic form of the piece is assured by the latter part, and nothing is gained. Various other assumptions concerning the text of verses 1, 2 have similar results, except that a greater smoothness may be secured. As our text reads, the arrangement should be as follows:

(General statement concerning the devout man.)

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High,
That abideth under the shadow of the Almighty—

(Devout man interrupting.)

I will say of Jehovah, He is my refuge and my fortress;
My God, in whom I trust.

(Address to the devout man.)

For he will deliver thee from the snare of the fowler,
And from the deadly pestilence.
He will cover thee with his pinions,
And under his wings shalt thou take refuge.
His truth is a shield and a buckler.
Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night,
Nor for the arrow that flieth by day;
For the pestilence that walketh in darkness,
Nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.
A thousand shall fall at thy side,
And ten thousand at thy right hand;
But it shall not come nigh thee.
Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold,
And see the reward of the wicked.

(Devout man, addressing God.)

For thou, O Jehovah, art my refuge!

(Address to the devout man.)

Thou hast made the Most High thy habitation;
There shall no evil befall thee,
Neither shall any plague come nigh thy tent.
For he will give his angels charge over thee,
To keep thee in all thy ways.
They shall bear thee up in their hands,
Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.
Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder:
The young lion and the serpent shalt thou trample under foot.

(God, concerning the devout man.)

Because he hath set his love upon me,
Therefore will I deliver him;
I will set him on high,
Because he hath known my name.
He shall call upon me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble:
I will deliver him, and honor him.
With long life will I satisfy him,
And show him my salvation.

**Divine
Protection.**

The leading thought of the Psalm is divine protection to the man that trusts Jehovah. Two kinds of danger are set forth as samples of those to which man is exposed, the danger from enemies and that from pestilence. The one sends forth the "arrow by day," the other inspires "terror by night;" for the "pestilence walketh in darkness," and the enemy is a "destruction that wasteth at noon-day." Jehovah is a Deliverer from both; from the pestilence "He will cover thee with His pinions," from the enemy His "truth is a shield and a buckler." The wicked will fall by thousands and tens of thousands in sight of the devout man, but the evil shall not come near him. All this is expressive of the personal nearness of God to individual men and the possibility of men coming into the closest relations with God. While this was many times typified in the earlier periods, as in the lives of Joseph, Moses, and David, it is in the Messianic era, where each person makes an individual covenant with Jehovah and receives personal remission of sins, that the ideal relations are secured.

**Doctrine of
Angels.**

The doctrine of angelic ministration here announced can hardly be set down as a mere poetic fancy. It does, indeed, heighten the effect, and give vividness to the thought of God's attending care: but the visitations of angels were understood by the Hebrews as historic, and in the New Testament their waiting upon Jesus at different times confirms to men the truth of this utterance. Satan quoted this passage in the temptation (Matt. 4:6), and assumed that with Jesus it was an accepted truth on which he might depend. Jesus' reply does not deny it, but teaches that man must not thrust himself into dangers to try the divine promise, since that would be but a public exhibit of a lack of faith. The New Testament doctrine of angelic service corresponds to the thought of this Psalm, as may be clearly seen in Heb. 1:14, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?" Thus the ideal man enjoys an ideal watchcare.

**Address by
Jehovah.**

The address by Jehovah with which the Psalm closes adds to the idea of divine deliverance the distinct promise of promotion in the words, "I will set him on high." This means, not simply above dangers, but above his fellows; and this reappears in the words of the next verse, "and honor him." Besides this, is the promise of long life during which Jehovah's salvation may be fully observed. The ideal man is therefore not to be merely delivered from dangers, but to be so prospered that he may know assuredly that it is Jehovah that is saving him from trouble. Yet he is not saved from having trouble, but from being overcome by it. The promise is, "I will be with him in trouble." When saved, it is by being brought out of trouble. This disposition of God to rescue men that trust Him is the Christian's highest guaranty that he will receive the ultimate salvation of the soul from sin, which is a vital element of the Christian's hope.

8. *The Ideal God. Psalm xcvi.***The
Psalm.**

As the last Psalm studied presents the man that is above all other men, so this describes the God that is above all gods. In composition

it is mainly a series of quotations and echoes of Isaiah, Micah and other Psalms. It may be readily divided into four stanzas of three verses each.

Jehovah reigneth; let the earth rejoice;
 Let the multitude of isles be glad.
 Clouds and darkness are round about him:
 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.
 A fire goeth before him,
 And burneth up his adversaries round about.

His lightnings lightened the world:
 The earth saw, and trembled.
 The mountains melted like wax at the presence of Jehovah,
 At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
 The heavens declare his righteousness,
 And all the peoples have seen his glory.
 Let them all be put to shame that serve graven images,
 That boast themselves of idols:
 Worship him all ye gods.
 Zion heard and was glad,
 And the daughters of Judah rejoiced,
 Because of thy judgments, O Jehovah.
 For thou, Jehovah, art most high above all the earth:
 Thou art exalted far above all gods.

O ye that love Jehovah, hate evil:
 He preserveth the souls of his saints;
 He delivered them out of the hand of the wicked.
 Light is sown for the righteous,
 And gladness for the upright in heart.
 Be glad in Jehovah, ye righteous,
 And give thanks to his holy, memorial name.

Regnancy of Jehovah.

“Jehovah reigneth” is the key-note of this whole group of Psalms, and occurs often as the opening clause. It is especially appropriate here where the regnancy of Jehovah over gods and men is the chief theme. His royal attendants “round about Him” are clouds and darkness; and the foundations of His throne are righteousness and justice. A fire is His forerunner, devouring His adversaries before His stately march. All nature is moved at His coming. The earth trembles at the brightness of His lightnings, the mountains melt at His presence, and the heavens proclaim His righteousness. Of all this the peoples are witness. Judah in particular rejoices at this vindication of Jehovah over

heathen divinities, and recognizes the true exaltation of her God. Here is the heart of the Psalm as respects its Messianic bearings; for it accomplishes a Messianic end only as it inspires weak-hearted Judah in her struggles for faith, and fits her for her sacred, national task.

**A National
Prophecy.**

The closing stanza is hortatory; and if written at the same time with the earlier part, which some for meager reasons call in question, it was intended to impress that cheer and confidence which the greatness of Jehovah ought to evoke. The expressions, "He preserveth the souls of His saints; He delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked," suggest the probable discouragements and dangers that beset Judah when the Psalm was issued. It had at the time a prophetic, national value.

9. *The Ideal Praise. Psalm xcvi.*

**The
Psalm.**

The ideal God calls for ideal praise, and it is here presented as a universal song in honor of Jehovah. It is composed of three strophes of three verses each, and much of the material is borrowed from the latter part of Isaiah.

Oh sing unto Jehovah a new song;
For he hath done marvellous things:
His right hand and his holy arm hath brought him salvation.
Jehovah hath made known his salvation:
His righteousness hath he revealed in the sight of the nations.
He hath remembered his lovingkindness
And his faithfulness toward the house of Israel:
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Make a joyful noise unto Jehovah, all the earth:
Break forth and sing for joy, yea, sing praises.
Sing praises unto Jehovah with the harp;
With the harp and the voice of melody.
With trumpets and sound of cornet
Make a joyful noise before the King, Jehovah.

Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof;
The world, and they that dwell therein;
Let the floods clap their hands;

Let the hills sing for joy together
 Before Jehovah; for he cometh to judge the earth:
 He will judge the world with righteousness,
 And the peoples with equity.

**Grounds of
Praise.**

The grounds of praise are the works of Jehovah, in that He has "done marvelous things" and "brought salvation," and His character in the points of righteousness, lovingkindness and faithfulness. These were the fundamental matters of prophetic importance in the period following the Exile, when an ignorance of them among the Jews would be fatal to their Messianic office. These were grounds which could be urged in favor of no divinity; and hence a praise is due Jehovah which exceeds any other that might be offered. The reasons for such praise came very near to the hearts of the Jewish people, who themselves through the faithfulness of Jehovah had been saved from Exile; and hence the fervor of the exhortation, "Break forth and sing for joy, yea, sing praises."

**Universal
Praise.**

In addition to the melody of grateful song, reinforced by the sound of musical instruments, combining to form man's greatest possible expression of praise, the sea is called upon to roar, the floods to clap their hands, the hills to sing for joy, the world and they that dwell therein to join in one mighty anthem of praise to the Most High. This universal ascription of honor to Jehovah is because He is the universal God; for "He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity." While this prophecy is not new, it is here put in new form, and is highly Messianic. Such universality of praise belongs to the future ideal age, as the world also awaits its universal judgment.

These are all wonderful prophecies, divinely instinct with distant blessing; and while we rest the pen, may we pause to consider that it was only in the souls of Hebrew prophets, touched with the thoughts of the Infinite, zealous with national expectation, and personally yearning for the kingdom and peace of God, that

such breadth of sympathy, such height of hope and such reaches of vision were possible. These great seers of the things of God and men, in their humble efforts to help their weak and faltering countrymen, have marked the path along which the world will do itself the greatest honor steadily to advance yet ten thousand years!

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